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OUR VILLAGE CHRONICLE.

BY MRS. NORA MARBLE.

"WALL, I guess I'll run over to Mrs. Ryneer's a bit," said Sarah Ann Pairsell, to her daughter Tilly, one summer afternoon, smoothing her hair with her hands. "I'll jist put on a clean apron and I'll be tidied up enough to run into the back way, I reckon."

"Oh, do, mar!" exclaims Tilly; "I'm a-dyin' to hear all about her summer boarder. I'm a-thinkin' she aire a stuck-up piece somehow."

"Stuck-up!" sniffed her mother; "you gals aire allers ready to think ennybody from the city with a spoonful of eddication, and a silk gown or two, ort to be stuck up. There was that high-flyer from York, last year, who wored two pair of bracelets at the same time, and you and the rest were jist eat up with envy. I kalkerlate, fer my part, that sence she had so much a-jingling about her wrists, she couldn't hev much a-occupyin' of her thinkin' apperatis."

"Well, your kalkerlatin' is all wrong, in her case, mar, fer I seed her floor the schoolmaster at Widow Koon's party, I did."

"Du tell!" exclaims Mrs. Pairsell. "I never heered on it afore. How ever could she hev done that?"

"Why, he were a-talkin' big about liberty and sich, to that Mr. Englishman, and he says as big as life, says he, 'Sic Stemper, try Annis,' and up speaks that city gal, as chipper as a little boy in his first pantaloons, and says she, 'Yes, I hev heard that the distemper was very prevailin' in these parts. Annis is very good in sich sickness I understand.' You never seed how took back the school-master was, mar. He stared at her, and gasped like a fish. He hadn't kalkerlated, you see, onto findin' ennybody 'round these here parts who knowed a furrin langwidge, too."

"I never did hev no opinion of that school-master, Tilly," said her mother, "and now I hev less. A furrin langwidge, indeed! Thar's something bad about a man who don't think the langwidge of his mother good enough for every-day use. Larnin' aire very good, Tilly, in its way, but ef you don't want to make enemies, you jist steer clear of it, that's my advise."

"Is that the reason you've got so many enemies, mar? Laws, I didn't never know what was the reason afore," giggled Tilly.

But Sarah Ann was tying her sun-bonnet, and feigned not to hear Tilly's remark.

"Here comes that prying, gossiping Ann Pairsell," muttered Mrs. Ryneer, as she saw that angular person proceeding through the vegetable garden, leisurely scanning the beds, stopping to count the chickens, peering into the barn; "she always comes in the back way, too. I thought she wouldn't let another day pass without 'dropping in.' Old bundle of curiosity!"

"Not seein' you to church, yesterday," began Sarah Ann, "I said to Tilly I was afeered you was sick. You aire lookin' spry 'nough, though. How be ye?"

Her apprehension relieved upon that point, and gardening and the weather duly discussed, the subject for dissection was forthwith dragged upon the tapis.

"How be ye a-findin' your city boarder, Mrs. Ryneer? I hed only a glimpse of her as she came up from the deepo, and one kain't kalkerlate much on that you know."

"No," cordially assented Mrs. Ryneer, "one cannot, or rather, one *should* not form impressions from so brief a glimpse."

"That's so. Most people aire too ready fer formin' impressions of everybody else 'ceptin theirselves. I allers finds out about things afore ever I open *my* mouth, Mrs. Ryneer."

"We have but few women in our community like yourself, Mrs. Pairsell," rejoins the other lady, with a meaning smile.

"No," assents the unsuspecting Sarah Ann, "and its a pity there ain't. My Tilly do get that all-fired mad when I excuse people's failur's. 'It's a flyin' into the face of Providence,' she says, fer you give Tilly a scent of somethin' in the way of scandal, and 'way she goes like a hound arter a fox. Sometimes there's no fox at all, and she finds she's been fooled—jist as the hounds be sometimes, you know, with an aniseed-bag—but all the same she's had the chase and sot tongues to waggin' and got her fun out'n it, she says."

"You must take great comfort in your daughter," dryly remarks Mrs. Ryneer.

"Yes, indeed; she do hev such high sperrits. What's you guest's name?" was the abrupt question,—"guest is genteeler I believe now-a-days than boarder,—so Tilly says."

"Her name is Wilson," briefly replies Mrs. Ryneer.

"*Mrs.* Wilson?"

"Yes."

"She be a widder, I reckin."

"I think so."

"Think? Du tell! You don't *know* then?"

"I asked her if she had a husband," quietly replied Mrs. Ryneer, "and she said 'no!'"

"And didn't she say nothin' more?"

"No."

"And didn't you ax her nothin' more?"

"No."

"Laws a massy! you don't say? How ever did you come to get her?"

"Through an advertisment."

"Which advertised?"

"She."

"And you answered of it? My! What did her advertisment ax for?"

"Quiet, small village; ocean-air. Moderate terms."

"Dear, dear," observed Mrs. Pairsell, thoughtfully, "if it's quiet she wants she struck it when she comed to this village. I was sayin' to Tilly no later than yesterday, that a body kin walk up and down our streets without ever seein' a single solitary person, or otherwise, at door or winder, or anywheres. *Peekin'* they must be somewhar, fer however kin they know who hes passed by durin' the arternoon, as some does, I'd like to know?"

Mrs. Ryneer making no reply to this, Sarah Ann continued.

"'I seed you a-passin' yisterday,' says Mrs. Smith to me, this mornin', 'you called on Mollie Baker,' says she, and then I hed to answer more questions 'bout Mrs. Baker's affairs than'll fill a book. How people kin ax so many questions 'bout other people's business I kain't understand. Ef I hadn't the patience of Job, I'd never git through answerin' 'em nuther. People do bother me and Tilly a mighty sight in that way. I guess, howsomever, its because we're always cheerful in speakin' up like! And so she's a widder! Does she wear mournin'?"

"Who?"

"Your boarder."

"No."

"Then I reckin her husband's been dead fer some time, and she's more than likely lookin' out fer another one. What church does she belong to?"

"Not any, I believe."

"Massy me! Then she *will* be tored to pieces by everybody in the hull place. Ef she war a Methody, you see," she went on, sagely, "why, she'd make friends 'mong *them*, and in consequence she'd hev only the Baptis' and Presby's ag'in' her—and wisy-wersy—but to 'tend none, my! But she will be gored through. A mad bull ain't nothin' to some people's tongues. They allers seem to see a red flag when they look onto a stranger, it 'pears to me. Howsomever, she may hev a leanin' one way or another."

"No, she's an agnostic, I believe."

"A what?"

"An agnostic."

"Land sakes alive! What's that?"

"Ask Mrs. Wilson herself, sometime," replied Mrs. Ryneer, merrily; "she can tell you her opinions better than I can."

"Aire it a sec'?" anxiously inquired her visitor.

"Not exaactly."

"A society?"

"No."

"She ain't no mejeum I hope, a-given' see-auntsies and sich."

"No," laughingly replied Mrs. Ryneer. "She has no belief in spirit manifestations."

"Wall, I give it up," said the mystified Mrs. Pairsell, and in a few moments thereafter took her departure.

"A Nagnoster," she repeated, on her way home. "A Nagnoster! There's somethin' about the name what don't sound right. It ain't mentioned into the Bible, that's flat, but neither be the Methody's and Presby's fer that matter, and they think theirselves the elect notwithstandin'. Fer my part I kain't see how people kin be so blinded, sence 'tis plain as the nose on a body's face, that jist sprinklin' or slickin' one's self over with water aire a deception and a cheat, at all times and in all places. Consequently *dippin'* is the only sure thing. A hard-shell Baptis' fer me, and the harder the better. A Gagnoster! Gracious me, the woman kain't be respectable, that's flat. Sech a belief ain't to be tolerated. Now there be Miss Smith a-peakin from under the blinds. Sence she has seen me I'll hev to drop in a minnit, or she'll feel slighted."

"Didn't I see you come out of Mrs. Ryneers?" asked Mrs. Smith, after the usual salutations.

"I reckin you did, ef you was lookin'," replied the other.

"Did you see the new boarder?" eagerly inquired Mrs. Smith.

"No, I didn't," was the emphatic answer, "and what's more I don't want to, nuther!"

"Massy me," ejaculated Mrs. Smith, with quivering nostrils, scenting carrion in the air, "hes she got a 'fectious disease?"

"Worse than that," was the solemn reply, "worse than that."

"Gracious! What a turn you aire givin' me, Sary Ann. Whatever kin you mean?"

"She aire a—a"— but much to Mrs. Pairsell's chagrin the unfamiliar word had entirely escaped her memory.

"A what?" breathlessly repeats Mrs. Smith, wiping her oozing mouth with the corner of her gingham apron.

"Not — a — respectable — person, Mrs. Smith," said Mrs. Pairsell, deliberately, feeling that something was required of her in face of her previous hesitation, "not a respectable person."

"And is Mrs. Ryneer aware of that fact?" asks the horrified Mrs. Smith.

"She aire. She told me she was a member of that community herself."

"Well, who'd a thort it," cries Mrs. Smith, with a glad sparkle in her eye. "Sister Ryneer, of all women. My! my! What'll Hezekiah say to *that*, when he comes home. Sich news, I kin hardly wait fer him to come."

"Don't mention *my* name, Sister Smith, fer I never tells nobody nothin', except you. I kin allers trust you as you trust me, that it'll never go no further than it ort."

"You jist rest easy, Sary Ann, on that score. I never talks to nobody except my relatives and friends, and if you can't talk to them, what ud be the use of livin', I'd like to know?"

"That's so, Sister Smith, that's so. Wall, I must be a-goin', fer Tilly is waitin' ter hum orful impatient, I know. I hev got ter stop to Miss Simmons's fer to borrer some mustard—she borrered some pepper from me last week, and sich things musn't be allowed to run on too long, you know. I'll not be kept long there, though, for Lucy hes very little to say most times;" and with many friendly words at parting, Mrs. Pairsell took her leave.

"Kept there!" sneered Mrs. Smith, as she gazed after her retreating visitor. "She'll not leave there fer a blessed half-hour. Lucy Simmons don't never talk much, but my, how she do drink it all in, specially if it's about a widder. Widders! how she do hate widders! She hez good reasons fer it, however, sence they hev allers beat her at fishin' fer a husband. I hev seen Lucy bait her hook with the best worms her poor sour countenance aforded—ter say nothin' of chickens and preserves and 'broidered slippers and sich—when along 'ud come a buxom widder and with jest a twist of the elbow hook the old feller purty nigh at the first throw. I do wish Jeremiah would come. He seed the widder comin' from the deepo t'other day, and was admirin' of her figger. Figger indeed! I took him down a peg or two right then and there. Well, while I'm waitin' I'll run over to Sister Prowl's a minnit, I reckin. Sech news!"

So the cloud no larger than a man's hand grew and grew. The breath from many lungs kept adding to its size and color.

Even the sighs of the good and merciful kept it moving. At last it hung heavy and portentious over the unconscious Mrs. Wilson's head, and broke one fine Sunday morning, much to her own and Mrs. Ryneer's amazement, in the church of which the latter had long been a member.

"What a beautiful day," said the widow to her hostess on that morning. "The Creator smiles upon everything, and all nature returns His smile. When in such a mood I feel that I may dare approach so august a being."

"Attend church then, with me," said Mrs. Ryneer; and Mrs. Wilson assenting, to church they went.

"A striking looking woman," inwardly commented the men.

"The brazen creature," thought the women.

Mrs. Ryneer and her companion seated themselves in a pew already occupied by two austere looking ladies. A cold stare, and not the slightest sign of recognition from the ladies.

"Singular," thought Mrs. Ryneer. "I wished to make Mrs. Wilson known to my friends, the Willburn family! I supposed *they* knew better than to freeze at the sight of a stranger." But the two Willburn ladies arose, and with stern countenances made their way past the new-comers to seek seats in the opposite aisle.

Mrs. Ryneer reddened to the brows, and her eyes questioned other well-known faces for a solution of the enigma. Averted faces, curling lips, curious eyes fastened upon her companion, were all she saw.

"Charity suffereth long and is kind. Charity envieth not. Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up," slowly and impressively read the preacher. "Charity thinketh no evil."

"I do declare," said Mrs. Pairsell to her sour-visaged daughter as they wended their way homeward, "I do declare, every time the parson said 'thinkin' no evil,' he 'peared to be lookin' right at Mrs. Smith, who sot in front of us. I felt like laffin' right out. It jist fitted her, you know."

"It apeared to me," said the sweet Tilly, "that he was a-gazin' at *you*, mar, most ov the time; it railly did."

"Tilly Pairsell, whatever are you meanin' by that speech? I won't stand no sich insiniwations from my darter, I jist won't."

"Oh, it might hev been Miss Simmons, who sot behind us," Tilly hastened to say, seeing fire in her mother's eye. "The parson feels that hook she fastened into him yit, I reckon."

"Thar was many a one in that church," gravely said Mrs. Pairsell, after a painful pause, "that the sermont this morning 'peared to hit. I was a countin' of 'em on my fingers, and I hed to stop cause I hadn't enough to go around."

"Why didn't you begin on your toes, then?" facetiously responded Tilly.

"I never thort of 'em," earnesly replied her mother, "or I would. How brazen that aire boarder of Mrs. Ryneer's kep' a lookin' at the parson. I felt like gettin' right up and smackin' her red cheeks, Tilly, I jist did."

"Goin' to church allers seems to rile you up, somehow, mar," pertly said Tilly; "you do nothin' but nag at everybody all day. It ain't a day of rest fer your tongue, that's certain."

"I'll box your ears fer that, as soon as ever I git home, Tilly Pairsell, see if I don't!" said her irate mother. "And as fer church-goin' rilen' me up, it's no wonder. The way folks tricks theirselves out now-a-days, and vaunts their new frocks and bunnits right afore your eyes, is enough to rile the feelin's of a saint. I don't see what the world aire a-comin' to, Tilly, I jist don't. The preacher better talk about money vauntin' itself, 'stead of charity. No danger charity vauntin' of itself in this village. It's a purty pass, too, when Dognasters push theirselves right under decent church-goin' people's noses. It's downright shameful the way they vaunt their 'pinions abroad, it jist is."

"I thort I'd hev to snicker right out when them Willburn's riz up, and hightly-tighted out'n the pew. Didn't you, mar?"

"No, I didn't, Tilly Pairsell, fer I'm more charitabler than you be. Howsomever, I don't intend to meddle with what don't consarn me. Keep your tongue atween your teeth, is my motto, Tilly; allers remember that, and you'll hev no trouble."

"Yes, mar, I hev allers followed your example that fer, but I kin take my affidavy that neither on us hev ever drawed any blood a-holdin' onto it when any talk was goin' about," replied the amiable Tilly.

"Holdin' on to what?" sharply inquired her mother.

"Our tongues!"

"I don't want enny more of your sass, Tilly Pairsell," cried her mother, choking with anger, "and—but 'sh! here comes Miss Simmons. Don't let her git an inklin' of our quarrelin' while comin' from church, fer massy's sake."

Mrs. Pairsell, I am fain to say, was not the only one of that congregation who fitted the words of the minister to his or her neighbor's needs, and in their self-righteousness gave thanks that they were not as other men.

"Gracious me, Sister Smith," was Sarah Ann's ejaculation a week later, as she ran for a minute into that neighbor's back yard, "did you ever see sich a rumpins as is bein' kicked up over last Sunday's doin's? Mr. Ryneer hev called a meetin' on the Deacons, and says him and her aire goin' to withdrawer from the membership. The pastor is goin' round awful solemn, fer Mr. Ryneer's money 'll be missed most powerful in the church, I ken tell you. What kin all the rumpins be about? Hev you heard on it, Mrs. Smith?"

"Why, it 'pears what you told me, Sary Ann, about Mrs. Ryneer's new boarder, hes leaked out."

"What *I* told you! massy me, Jane Smith, I'm as innercent as any babe jist unborned of sayin' airything agin nobody. I never hev spoke one word with the new boarder, and how kin I ever hev said airything about her?"

"Oh, you know well enough what I mean, Sary Ann Pairsell! It's what you said Mrs. Ryneer said, the day you stopped in there."

"Oh, why that was nothin', Jane Smith, nothin' at all! I hev found out since what a *noster* be."

"A noster?"

"Yes, or Tattynoster or somethin' like that."

"Why of all things, Sary Ann Pairsell! You told me she wasn't respectable, and that Mrs. Ryneer said so."

"I never said no such a thing, Jane Smith, and if I *did* you be an old leakin' vessel to hev let it out, there!"

"An old leakin' vessel, indeed!" cried that lady. "If I wasn't a Christian, and a Baptis' at that, I'd speak my mind pretty free of you and your daughter Tilly, I would, indeed, Sary Ann Pairsell."

"Oh, don't let ennything so small as that keep you from enlightnen' me on that point, Mrs. Christian Smith," sneered Mrs. Pairsell. "Speak it right out, Baptis' or no Baptis'."

"Well, my 'pinion aire that you be a lyin', gabblin', sly old fox! There, you've got my 'pinion and 'pinion of all the hull town to onct, Sary Ann Pairsell, and much good may it do you! Hurry home now, and tell that news to Tilly," and with a grim smile of satisfaction, Mrs. Smith unceremoniously slammed the door in the face of her very angry, and well nigh speechless visitor.

OUR FIRST CLIENT.

BY R. M THOMAS.

LOADER and I had established ourselves at No. 152 Bedford Road, there to begin our career as fully fledged solicitors. Our names were engraved on a brass plate fixed outside the front door; everything was in readiness—desks, stools, and iron deed-boxes in the outer office; the floor of the sanctum was richly carpeted—we had a large square writing-table and well-filled book-cases; there were even dummy documents tied up with red tape and placed obtrusively on the table; all was prepared for the appearance of our first client.

It was towards the close of a very dull afternoon in early spring; the feeble sunlight, which had struggled to assert itself during the whole day, seemed about to give up the contest, when Loader closed the book on criminal law which he had been studying, and rapped it soundly with his knuckles.

"Marrable," he said, "I should like to try my skill on an intricate murder case!"

"No doubt," I returned, laughing at this sudden outbreak of professional enthusiasm.

"To piece together disjointed fragments of evidence—to build a terrible edifice of proof from the most unpromising materials! What is your opinion—eh, Marrable?"

"Well, it would be exciting," I remarked.

"Exciting? Why, it would be like hunting! If you are for the defence," he said, growing warm with his subject, "the question is how to throw the pursuers off the scent; if for the prosecution, then you are hounds and huntsmen all rolled into one."

"Exactly!" I agreed. "Meanwhile clients seem to be shy of placing their cases in the hands of the firm."

"Yes, confound them! Well, I'll tell you one thing—when clients do come, I'll make them pay heavily for their neglect of us now!"

"Your revenge will have my warmest sympathy," I returned, laughing merrily in spite of myself.

"It is half-past four," said Loader, pulling out his watch, "so I'll finish up. There will be no clients to-night."

"Not much hope of that!" I sighed.

"Well, I shall go out," decided Loader. "Will you come?"

"Not to-night; I don't feel in the humor," I answered.

"All right," he said, humming a tune and putting on his overcoat. "Do not wait for me; I shall perhaps be late."

"Very well," I replied.

I was not sorry to be left alone. My thoughts still clung obstinately to the one terrible sorrow of my life; so, turning in my chair, I stirred the fire, and sat looking dreamily into the embers, while intent on the absorbing topic of my lost love—the sweet, delicious dream that had been so short, and from which the awakening had been so sad. On this day I had been thinking of Adelaide incessantly, and I had reveled in the melancholy luxury of recalling her image as she used to look a few short months before.

It was at the old Vicarage of Sunningfield that I first beheld Adelaide Emery. All my people lived in Huntingdonshire, and it was on one of my visits there during the vacation that we met. She was just seventeen, with rich dark brown tresses and a lovely pink and white complexion. Her eyes were of that wondrous shade of blue which the old writers ascribe to those of the goddess Pallas. Her youthful figure was perfect, her every movement was full of girlish grace, and her qualities of heart and mind were worthy of her beauty. Adelaide was the daughter of a general in the army, who, marrying a young and beautiful woman late in life, died leaving to the widow the income derived from the whole of his fortune, which at her death was to go to her daughter. In order that the father's wishes might be carried out, strict settlements were made and trustees appointed. If, however, the daughter died before the widow, the latter was empowered to dispose of the property by will as she pleased.

Years passed by, and Mrs. Emery married again—this time a French nobleman, the Comte de Carnac. After this event, Adelaide was placed at a boarding-school, and always spent her holidays with her relatives at the Vicarage of Sunningfield. Ours was a case of love at first sight. What a happy time it was! Soon we were engaged; and then, alas, the parting came! She had finished her education, and henceforth she was to live abroad with her mother at Paris. We vowed eternal faith; and she was taken to France by a kinswoman. Time went by, and I was looking forward to seeing her again, having received a letter from her saying that the count, her mother, and herself were coming to England. I was full of joy at the prospect, when one morning I took up the *Times* and read the details of a terrible railway accident which had happened on the Dover line during the previous night. It was one of those awful disasters that arrest the attention of a nation. The particulars were harrowing in the extreme; many persons had been killed, while some had been miraculously saved. A list of the killed and injured was given, and among the former occurred the name of Adelaide Emery. The newspaper dropped from my grasp. I will not describe my despair and misery. I hurried down to the scene of the accident. The passengers who were killed were disfigured beyond hope of recognition. With all the joy crushed out of my life, I returned to London to mourn my darling's loss and treasure her memory.

How long I remained that evening looking into the fire, absorbed in my melancholy thoughts, I cannot say. I was aroused by a footstep in the outer office. Our one clerk opened the door and informed me that a person wanted to see me.

"Come in!" I said, rising and advancing to the door; whereupon a lady dressed in mourning, with jet-black hair and the brightest black eyes I had ever beheld, came forward, gazing at me with an expression of watchful scrutiny. Motioning her to a chair, I waited to hear her business.

"Marrable & Loader?" she inquired, with a slight foreign accent.

"Yes," I replied.

"Solicitors?"

"Precisely."

"Very well," she said; "I beg your professional assistance."

"In what way?"

"To make a will."

"I am at your service," I said, feeling a slight tremor of excitement, though I strove to appear quite calm.

"It is not my own will," she added, observing that I waited for further information.

"No?" I queried. "Whose then?"

"I want you to come with me," she replied, evading my question.

"Oh!" I ejaculated. "Where?"

"To this address," she answered, taking a visiting-card from her case and penciling the address at the corner.

"Ah," I said, reading, "'The Alders, Wimbledon Common.'"

"Will you come?" she asked.

"Certainly," I replied. "But how are we to get there?"

"I have the carriage waiting at the door," she returned promptly.

Placing some necessary papers in a small deed-bag, I followed her into the brougham, which was rapidly driven of. We proceeded for some distance in silence, when I felt in my pockets for the visiting-card. How stupid! I had left it behind me on the office table, and had been too excited to notice the name. However, I should know all in good time. Meanwhile the carriage rattled onward through Kensington, over Battersea Bridge, through Wandsworth, then up the dark undulating roads that lead to Wimbledon Common, finally stopping before a wooden gate in an old weather-stained and very high brick wall. My companion descended the moment the carriage stopped, and, opening the gate with a key, passed through, I following.

While she re-locked the gate, I glanced at the old rambling brick mansion beyond, which looked so desolate that one would have judged it to be untenanted. Crossing the ill-kept and weedy garden, we stopped before the front entrance to the house. I had just time to remark that all the windows were guarded by heavy wooden shutters, when the door was opened by a gentleman in evening dress, bearing a candle in a silver candlestick, the light from which he shaded with his hand.

"Monsieur the lawyer?" he inquired, addressing my companion.

"Yes," she answered, passing in and immediately disappearing.

"Enter, sir," said the gentleman, speaking in a friendly tone and with a slight foreign accent.

I did so quickly, and he shut the door behind me. He was very thin and tall, with raven-black hair and eyes as dark and bright as those of the lady. His complexion, like hers, also, was remarkably sallow, while the lower part of his face was covered by a carefully-trimmed black beard.

"That way," he said, pointing—somewhat frantically, I thought—to the staircase; "I will follow."

Bowing slightly, I went up the broad staircase, he following, until we arrived before a door on the first landing. Opening it, we passed into a small, square apartment which seemed to be the dressing-room attached to a larger chamber, the door in the wall opposite opening into it, I conjectured. The room was furnished partly as a bedroom, partly as a study. There was a small brass bedstead in one corner, a book-case close at hand, and a table with writing materials upon it in the centre. My companion handed me a chair.

"You are a solicitor, sir—is it not so?" he inquired.

"Yes," I replied.

"Not knowing the lawyers in this district, I sent a messenger to Bedford Road, a famous place for lawyers, I am informed."

I smiled assent.

"Telling her to bring the first she could find," he continued, with a smile, showing his rather prominent white teeth.

Ours was the first house on the south side of Bedford Road; consequently it was to accident that we were indebted for our first client. I nodded pleasantly, and said:—

"You wish me to prepare a will?"

"Yes."

"Your own?"

"No; that of a lady—my wife."

"Can I see her?"

"No; she is ill, very ill. But this will save all trouble," he continued, taking a piece of paper from a drawer and handing it to me. "You will find all necessary instructions there."

He turned away as I commenced reading the instructions; and I had not read many

words before I stopped short, strangely puzzled. Where had I seen the handwriting before? Surely I knew it! What was it that connected it in my mind with Adelaide? The names farther down enlightened me.

"Testatrix, Beatrix Adelaide de Carnac, widow of the late General Emery;" and the name of the person who was to inherit the whole of the property was Henri Bertrand de Carnac! If this will were made, the whole of the fortune left by General Emery would pass eventually into the hands of the count, my darling Adelaide's death having placed the property at the disposal of her mother.

To draw up such a document was a hateful task to me; I already detested this man with the sinister eyes who would reap such benefit from the death of my beloved. I felt inclined to tear the paper into fragments and cast them in his false-looking face; but I knew that to act so would be absurd. If his wife were willing to give him the wealth the general had left, who could prevent her? After all, it was better that I should be there than a stranger. I would draw up the will and see her sign it. If she did so willingly, I would not interfere. I should see the husband and wife together; a look, a tone, would be significant to me of the state of affairs. If he were using any unfair means, I would tear up the document, leave the house, and take the proper steps to rescue the lady from his influence.

Sitting down at the table, I drew up the will in proper form, bequeathing to the Comte de Carnac the fortune that should have descended to my darling, while the count sat opposite watching me. The house seemed as quiet as the grave—not a sound was to be heard except the scratching of the pen upon the paper—when suddenly a shrill scream broke the silence. The sound came from somewhere in the upper story. I paused, pen in hand, to listen. The closing of a door was the next thing I heard, followed by the noise of footsteps—evidently a woman's—ascending the creaking staircase; then all was as silent as before.

Wondering what could have caused this cry of fright, I rose with the intention of going to the assistance of the sufferer. At the same moment the count stepped forward with a frown on his brow.

"What was that?" I cried.

"Nothing, nothing!" he answered, hastily, putting himself between me and the door. "Pray be seated!" Then he added, with a hypocritical look and tone, "My wife perhaps, my poor, poor suffering wife! Ah, sir, you do not know what she suffers! But I will go to her. This need not interrupt your task."

I resumed my seat unwillingly, having a strong desire to ascertain the meaning of the cry. But how could I interfere? Was she not his wife?

"You will excuse me," he said, "if I leave you for a moment."

He closed the door behind him as he spoke, and I heard him also ascend the stairs.

Scarcely had he gone when I was startled by seeing the door opposite to me open, and a frail, pale-faced woman in a long, flowing white night-robe glide into the room and drop wearily into the chair at the other side of the table.

"Hush!" she whispered, nervously, laying her hand in a frightened manner upon my arm, as I uttered a slight exclamation and was about to rise. "Hush! Do not betray me! I am alone and in their power!"

"Have no fear of me, madam," I said, reassuringly, wondering at her mysterious manner.

"Listen!" she said. "I am the wife of that man who has just left you. Oh, if I could tell you what cruel wrongs he has inflicted upon me and mine!"—and the tears rolled down her poor faded cheeks. "Well am I punished for the folly of a second marriage! But I must be quick," she continued, drying her eyes and listening intently for a moment, "he will return soon. I have heard all he has been saying to you. You are here to make a will?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Whose?" she inquired.

"Yours," I answered, "which bequeaths all your property to him."

"It is as I thought," she murmured; "he is seeking my death. He has isolated me from everybody; even my maid has been dismissed since the railway accident. A doctor who is in league with him is the only person I see except his sister—the terrible woman with the black eyes who watches me day and night. They are poisoning me; they want me to make a will. He is a ruined gambler. My death is his only resource."

The noise of footsteps descending the stairs was now heard. She rose hastily, and was about to depart.

"I will save you," I said, determinedly. "Return to your room, and let them have no suspicion that you have spoken to me; otherwise they may place it out of my power to help you."

I opened the door for her to pass through, and closed it noiselessly. As I resumed my seat the count re-entered, followed by the lady in black.

So, I thought, this is the beloved wife about whom we are so tender! It was not her shriek then in the upper story. Whose could it have been? Was there another victim in the house? I would be patient and find out. I scrutinized the lady's features and dress; not a fold was disturbed, the features were quite placid. Certainly this was not a woman to cry so as to disturb the house.

"Is the document ready?" inquired the count.

"Quite," I replied, handing it to him. "The testatrix has only to sign her name at the bottom in the presence of two witnesses, and, as a legal instrument, it will be complete."

"I intended the doctor to be one witness," the count remarked; "but he has not come," —with a trace of annoyance in his tone.

"Is it not possible to wait?" suggested the sister.

"No," replied the count, with a frown; the cry in the upper story had evidently disturbed his plans; then turning to me, "This lady will be one witness, the gardener will be the other." I bowed. "Claudine," he said, to the lady, "I will go and bring the gardener, while you prepare my wife to receive this gentleman at her bedside, do you understand?"—with a meaning look.

"I understand," she answered.

The count waited until she was gone; then he said:—

"Will you accompany me down-stairs? I must go to the stables for the gardener. He is so stupid; generally intoxicated; but he performs the functions of the groom," smiling that false smile of his, "and out of charity I keep him."

I was scarcely able to conceal the disgust I felt towards the treacherous, smiling villain; but I managed to utter some commonplace expression of assent.

The Frenchman had now evidently arranged his course of action. We went down the staircase together, crossed the hall, and, descending three steps, traversed a narrow passage terminating in a door leading to the back portion of the grounds. When we had passed through, the count allowed me to go a few paces forward, and then went back; and I could hear him locking the door.

"I need not come with you," I said. "I will wait here and smoke a cigarette till you return."

"As you will," he replied. "I shall not be long;" and he disappeared down the path leading to a low building beyond, just visible in the darkness, which I conjectured was the stables.

Thinking over the strange events of the past few hours, I struck a fusee to light my cigarette, when a man seemed to rise out of darkness and place his hand gently upon my shoulder. Before I could utter an exclamation, the friendly tones of Jack Loader's voice sounded in my ears.

"Good heavens, Loader," I gasped, "how did you get here?"

"Hush," replied Jack, "and listen with all your might! I've brought you news which may lead to a realization of happiness beyond your wildest hopes. No sooner had you left our chambers to-night than I returned for my gloves, and was surprised to find you gone. Inquiring of our old clerk, I learned you had left in a carriage with a mysterious lady. I was wondering what could have happened, when a man called and requested an interview. He was a detective from Scotland Yard, and is waiting for me on the other side of the garden wall at this very moment."

For goodness' sake, Jack," I whispered, "cut your story short, or the Frenchman will be back! What does the detective want?"

"He is investigating the railway accident. The count hurried up to London immediately it occurred, insisting upon taking with him in the teeth of the doctor's advice the two ladies, his wife and maid, who were suffering from a shock to the system consequent upon the accident. His haste attracted notice. The relatives of the late General Emery interested themselves in the matter, as the death of the step-daughter Adelaide would remove the only obstacle to his wife's inheriting the whole of the property. The count came to England accompanied only by his wife, step-daughter and maid. What if it were the maid who was killed in the accident and not the step-daughter; and what if the Frenchman, taking advantage of darkness and confusion and semi-unconscious-

ness of his step-daughter, should have determined to pass off the dead maid for the living daughter, eh?"

"Oh, this is a romance, Jack," I said, "it could not be!"

"Wait a bit!" continued Jack. "Suspicions were aroused. The maid has been searched for; but she is nowhere to be found."

"Stop!" I gasped, panting for breath at the vision of hope and love which these words conjured up, while my thoughts instantly reverted to the cry in the upper chamber. A terrible network of crime became visible to me. "One word more, Jack," I said. "How did you know I was here?"

"By the card you left on the office table."

"Heaven be thanked for a lucky accident!" I murmured. "Now, Jack, hide yourself in the shrubbery till the Frenchman has re-entered the house; then fetch your detective, and we'll secure the whole gang—count, sister, gardener, and whoever else he may have in the house."

"Trust to me!" said Loader, disappearing at once.

A few moments later the count and the gardener came up the path, and we all three entered the house, the count carefully locking the door again.

He led the way up the staircase—not to the little room I had been in before, but straight into the chamber, where on the bed lay the testatrix, who looked up languidly as I entered and then turned away her face.

"You have the will, count?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, producing it.

Looking round the room, I noticed that he had omitted to provide writing materials. Seeing my opportunity, I turned to him.

"Does not that door lead to the room where I prepared the document?" I inquired.

"Yes," he answered.

"You have neither pens nor ink here," I said, taking up a candle. "Wait; I will fetch them."

Before he could stop me I entered the dressing-room, closed the door behind me, went to the window, undid the fastenings, and pushed back the shutters and also the catch of the window; finally I left the candle on the table. The light ought to guide Loader, I thought, as I re-entered the bedroom with the inkstand and pens. I was just in time, for the count's sister almost stumbled over me in the doorway, and I caught her several times glancing at me furtively.

"Adelaide," said the count sweetly to the invalid, "I want you to sign this paper, my love."

The poor wife cowered before his serpent-like gaze, and murmured simply, "Yes," then turned her head wearily upon her pillow.

"Pardon me," I interposed, as I was anxious to gain time to allow Loader to see the light in the next room, "I must read the will to the testatrix, so that she may fully understand its contents.

"As you will," said the Frenchman, evidently annoyed; "but it is unnecessary. I have told her—in fact, it was at her wish that the instructions were prepared."

I knew this to be a lie, but thought it best to make no remark. I read the will slowly from beginning to end. When it was finished the count impatiently took a pen, dipped it into the ink, and approached the bed.

"Come, my dear," he said, "here is the pen."

The will was spread out upon a small table at the bedside. The invalid rose on her elbow, took the pen, and was about to sign. At that moment I thought I heard a noise in the adjoining room. Loader was here at last; it was time to conclude the farce.

"Stay!" I cried, sternly.

The pen dropped from the lady's hand, and she fell back upon the pillow.

"What is the meaning of this interruption?" asked the count, fiercely.

"It means simply this, that, if that will is signed, sealed and delivered, it will be of no value to you."

"Why?"

"Because the testatrix has nothing to bequeath."

"Nothing to bequeath! Insolent, you forget yourself! He is a madman, this lawyer!" cried the count's sister.

"Claudine, silence!" said the count; then turning to me, his face pale with excitement, he inquired, "Why has she nothing to bequeath?"

"Because an infamous imposition has been practised upon the world. Miss Adelaide Emery was not killed in the railway accident. She is alive; therefore her mother cannot, by the terms of her late husband's will, dispose of anything."

"How do you know that?"

"Remember the scream in the upper story," I hazarded.

A quick glance passed between the brother and sister, and then the count smiled.

"You know nothing," he said, laughing contemptuously. "It was my sister."

"That is untrue! It was the voice of Adelaide Emery."

A light seemed to flash across the mind of the count.

"You know her!" he ejaculated. "Ah, yes—I remember now! You are the lover whom she wrote about to her mother," he said, taking a letter from an escritoire at the bedside. "Here it is—'Marrable.' Fool that I was to forget that name!" he muttered between his teeth. "You wished to get the money for yourself. You feel disappointed—cheated of your bride and her money?" he cried, laughing a low, sardonic laugh. "Well, I will tell you what your share will be. You will be cheated again; you shall have nothing for your lawyer's business this evening."

"Pshaw!" I muttered, looking at the wretch with quiet contempt.

"You have made a will all for nothing—he, he, he!" chimed in the precious sister.

I bowed to her with mock respect.

"And I will throw you out of the house like a dog!" hissed the count, my coolness causing his temper to get the better of him.

"Not just yet," I replied calmly, taking up the candle, "because I have a particular desire to see the upper portion of this charming residence. Would you mind showing me the way, madam?" I asked gravely, turning with ceremonious respect to the lady, who glared at me viciously. "No; I see you would rather not. Well, I will go myself."

"Not a foot!" cried the count, placing himself between me and the doorway, fumbling meanwhile in an inner pocket of his waistcoat.

Seeing he was about to draw a weapon, I closed with him. He was no match for me, an athlete. Wrenching the pistol from his grasp I threw it to the other end of the room, and cast the count from me. He sprang at me again, and in another moment I should have dashed him reeling away, when I felt the powerful grip of the gardener's hands at my throat. By a vigorous effort I managed to get clear of this new assailant and struck him a heavy blow in the face, which sent him senseless to the floor. Now commenced a struggle with the enraged count. In the interval he had seized a knife, with which he rushed at me furiously. I could see the sister down on her hands and knees at the farther end of the room searching for the pistol. On came the Frenchman, thrusting at me with the knife as I hastily avoided him, pulling the table-cloth from the table and flinging ornaments, candles, and whatever objects came to my hand at him to impede his movements. The invalid shrieked with horror as she sat up in the bed watching the murderous scene. At last I seized a chair and brought it down with a crushing blow upon the count's head. He fell upon the floor, his face covered with blood.

In all my excitement the vision of Adelaide was before my eyes. To rescue her was my only thought; and now this one dominating passion impelled me to rush madly to the door. My hand was on the handle, but before I could turn it there was a flash—a report. The room seemed filled with smoke; the lights burnt blue, and seemed to dance wildly; my breast burned as though it were on fire; a vision of many faces and forms bathed in supernatural light flashed before me for one brief moment; then all was darkness.

It was several weeks later when I awoke from a calm and refreshing sleep. I looked round at the prettily furnished bedroom, wondering where I was and where I had been. The sunlight was shining through the partially opened French window; the warm air was wafted in gently, laden with the perfume of flowers. I lay thus gazing tranquilly around, when some one came towards the bed, and Adelaide, my darling, looked down sweetly upon me.

"Where am I, dearest?" I asked, after our first long embrace.

"Hush! I must not tell you!" she murmured. "You have been ill—oh, so long! You must rest and wait. Mother," she whispered, "come and look. He has returned to us at last."

Adelaide's mother appeared at the bedside now.

"Be patient," she said; "you must not talk till you are stronger. In a few days Mr. Loader will come to see you, and tell you all that has happened."

I was content, for my darling was with

me. As the days went by I gradually became stronger, and at last I was strong enough to be taken out again into the glorious sunshine, and to feel the delicious summer breezes wafted across my cheeks.

One day, propped up by pillows, I was seated in a large arm-chair in the drawing-room—Adelaide had been playing to me—when a carriage rolled up the drive and stopped at the front entrance. Presently I heard a man's firm tread in the hall, and soon Jack Loader was standing by my side.

"Dear old Jack!" I said, pressing his hand.

"Glad to see you picking up as last, old fellow!" he replied, returning my pressure. "I thought that vixen of a Frenchwoman had killed you."

"What! It was she who shot me, then?"

"Yes; and you have had a terrible fever ever since then, old boy. You've been hovering between life and death for ever so long. But thank Heaven, you are recovering now."

"Tell me all about it, Jack; I am dying to hear the particulars."

"Well, you know I left you to bring the detective. When he came over into the garden we looked around, wondering how we were to effect an entrance. All the shutters to the ground floor windows were fast; there was no getting in that way without making a noise. At last I spied a light in a window on the first floor. With great difficulty I managed to climb up to it, and, as luck would have it, found the window unfastened."

"I left it like that," I murmured, "and put the candle there."

"Well, that saved your life; for no sooner was I in the room than I heard the noise of a struggle in the adjoining chamber. I left the detective to follow as he could, and rushed into the bedroom, but too late to prevent the Frenchwoman from firing. She had the pistol in her hand, and fired as I entered. With the help of the officer I secured both the count and his fair relative. You were our next care. You were desperately wounded; and we carried you to the pretty bed-chamber where you woke to consciousness."

I sat musing for a moment over Jack's narrative, and then I asked:—

"Where was Adelaide?"

"In an apartment in the upper story."

"I knew it!" I cried. "Thank Heaven, you were unharmed!" I added, looking up into my darling's beautiful face, and kissing her dear hand as she stood by my chair.

When I had recovered sufficiently, Adelaide and I were quietly married, with the consent and approval of her mother, who remained with us.

Meanwhile Loader achieved his ambition. A marvellously intricate criminal case called forth all his abilities and absorbed his entire attention: the count and his sister were awaiting their trial. Suffice it to say that Jack was not found wanting, and that long terms of imprisonment for conspiracy and attempted murder were in due time passed on both.

Business now flowed in upon us, and with it prosperity; but though many cases of interest and delicacy are daily passing through our hands, and many have since called upon us for professional assistance, we have never in our subsequent experience been tempted to forget the exciting circumstances that attended the advent of our first client.

SOME SOCIAL SLIPS.

"I BEG your pardon, madam, but you are sitting on my hat," exclaimed a gentleman. "Oh, pray excuse me; I thought it was my husband's," was the unexpected reply. In another instance of conjugal amenities, a wife said to her husband, "I saw Mrs. Becker this morning, and she complained that on the occasion of her last visit you were so rude to her that she thought she must have offended you." "Nothing of the kind," he answered. "On the contrary, I like her very much; but it was rather dark at the time, and when I entered the room at first I thought it was you."

"Poor John, he was a kind and forbearing husband," sobbed John's widow, on her return from the funeral. "Yes," said a sympathizing neighbor; "but it is all for the

best. You must try to comfort yourself, my dear, with the thought that your husband is at peace at last."

A gentleman had accompanied a friend home to dinner, and as they seated themselves at the table, the hostess remarked: "I trust that you will make allowances, Mr. Blankley. My servant left me very unexpectedly, and I was compelled to cook the dinner myself." "Oh, certainly, my dear madam, certainly," responded the guest with great emphasis; "I can put up with anything."

Another amusing slip took the form of an unhappy after-dinner speech. There was an entertainment given by a gentleman deservedly popular. It was extremely handsome, and champagne flowed freely. The evening was well advanced when a benignant old gentleman rose to propose a toast. He spoke with fluency, but somehow he said exactly the opposite to what he meant. "I feel," said he, "that for a plain country squire like myself to address this learned company is indeed to cast pearls before swine." Never was so successful a speech made. He could get no further for many minutes. The company applauded vociferously and as though they would never cease.

"Now, Miss Brown," said an earnest listener, "won't you play something for us?" "No, thank you," said the lady, "I'd rather hear Mr. Jones." Earnest listener: "So would I; but"—— Here he was stopped by the expression on the young lady's face; and he looked confused for half an hour after she indignantly turned and left him.

A person who was recently called into court for the purpose of proving the correctness of a surgeon's bill was asked whether the doctor did not make several visits after the patient was out of danger. "No," replied the witness, "I considered the patient in danger as long as the doctor continued his visits."

A physician walking with a friend said to him: "Let us avoid that pretty little woman you see there on the left. She knows me and casts on me looks of indignation. I attended her husband." "Ah, I understand. You had the misfortune to despatch him," was the remark that slipped out. "On the contrary," replied the doctor, "I saved him." A guest at a country inn exclaimed: "I say, landlord, your food is worse than it was last year." "Impossible, sir," was the rather ambiguous reply of the landlord. "Why," said a counsel to a witness, "are you so very precise in your statement? Are you afraid of telling an untruth?" Witness, promptly, "No, sir." At a recent inquiry into the sanity of a young man of large property, witnesses were being called to prove that he was unfit to manage his affairs. A curious slip was made by a schoolmaster when asked if he had formed any opinion as to the state of mind of the alleged lunatic. "Oh, yes," he replied; "I can testify he is an idiot. He was one of my favorite pupils." "I have met this man," said a lawyer, with extreme severity, "in a great many places where I would be ashamed to be seen myself;" and then he paused and looked with astonishment at the smiling court and jury.

Here are a few other instances of something very like putting one's foot in it. The legislature of a Western state having a bill under consideration for the regulation of tax collectors, an honorable member got upon his feet and said: "Mr. Speaker, I go in heavy for that bill. The tax collectors are all a set of knaves. I was one myself for ten years." The bill passed. "How are you getting on in your new place?" asked a lady of a girl whom she had recommended for a situation. "Very well, thanks." "I am glad to hear of it," said the lady. "Your employer is a nice person, and you cannot do too much for her." "I don't mean to, ma'am," was the innocent reply.

Here is a naive declaration from the prospectus of a weekly paper: "The staff, with the exception of the editor, has been very carefully selected, and deserves to secure success." A Californian paper is said to have been sued for libel by a widow for speaking of her deceased husband as having "gone to a happier home." "Dear sir," said an amateur farmer just from the country, writing to the secretary of an Agricultural Society, "put me down on your list of cattle for a calf." A certain caravan orator at a fair, after a long yarn descriptive of what was to be seen inside, wound up by saying: "Step in, gentlemen, step in. Take my word for it, you will be highly delighted when you come out." "Allow me, madam, to congratulate you on your acquaintance with that charming lady," said a gallant gentleman; "she is young, beautiful and intelligent." "Oh, certainly," replied the lady; "but don't you think she is a trifle conceited?" "Why, madam, just put your-

self in her place, and say would you not be conceited too," was the rather startling comment.

This social slip is even worse. A city man complained bitterly of the conduct of his son. He related at length to an old friend all the young man's escapades. "You should speak to him with firmness and recall him to his duty," said his friend. "But he pays not the least attention to what I say; he listens only to the advice of fools. I wish you would talk to him."

BIOGRAPHICAL PORTFOLIO.

THE OLDEST MAN ALIVE.

JAMES JAMES, a negro and citizen of the United States, who resides at Santa Rosa, Mexico, is probably the oldest man on earth. He was born near Dorchester, S. C., in 1752, and while an infant was removed to Medway River, Ga., in the same year that Franklin brought down electricity from the thunder clouds. In 1772 there was quite an immigration into South Carolina, and his master (James James, from whom he takes his name) moved near Charleston, S. C., in company with a number of his neighbors. On June 4, 1776, when twenty years of age, a large British fleet, under Sir Peter Parker, arrived off Charleston. The citizens had erected a palmetto-wood fort on Sullivan's Island, with twenty-six guns, manned by 500 troops under Colonel Moultrie, and on June 28 the British made an attack by land and water, and were compelled to withdraw after a ten-hours' conflict. It was during this fight that Sergeant Jasper distinguished himself by replacing the flag, which had been shot away upon the bastion, on a new staff. His master, James James, manned one of the guns in this fight, and Jim, the subject of this sketch, and four other slaves were employed around the fort as general laborers. Jim followed his master throughout the war, and was with General Moultrie at Port Royal, S. C., February 3, 1779, when Moultrie defeated the combined British forces of Provost and Campbell. His master was surrendered by General Lincoln at Charleston, S. C., on February 12, 1780, to the British forces, and this ends Jim's military career.

He remembers of the rejoicing in 1792 throughout the country in consequence of Washington's election to the presidency, he then being forty years of age. In this year his first master died, aged about sixty years. Jim then became the property of "Marse Henry" [Henry James], owning large estates and about thirty slaves, near Charleston. On account of having raised "Marse Henry" Jim was a special favorite with his master and was allowed to do as he chose. His second master, Henry, died in 1815, about fifty-five years of age, and Jim, now sixty-three years of age, became the property of James James, Henry's second son. In 1833 the railroad from Charleston to Savannah was completed, then the longest railroad in the world, and Jim, with his master, took a trip over the road, and was shown special favors on account of his age, now eighty-one. James James was ten years of age at his father's death, and when he became of age inherited estates, slaves, etc., among whom were "old Uncle Jim" and his family. James James lived in South Carolina until 1855, when he moved to Texas with all his slaves. James desired that his slaves should be free at his death, and in 1858 moved to Mexico so that they could be free before his death. James returned to the United States and died in Texas; and in 1865, after there were no longer slaves in the Union, Uncle Jim's children and grandchildren returned to the United States. Five years ago, at the age of one hundred and thirty, Jim could do light chores, but subsisted mostly by contributions from the citizens; but for the past two years, not being able to walk, he remains for the most part in his little jacal, his wants being supplied by generous neighbors. The rheumatism in his legs prevents him from walking, but yet he has sufficient strength in his arms to drag himself a short distance,—fifty yards or more,—and readily took a position on the outside of his cabin to enable the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat* correspondent to make his photograph.

AN EPISODE.

BY C. M. LAUSTMANN.

WE met beside the moonlit sea,
While summer winds were blowing lowly,
In mazes of the dreamy waltz,
To languid music, floating slowly.

A glance or two from starry eyes,
A white hand on my shoulder resting;
A smile too sweet to be so fleet,
From lips where love on smiles sat feasting;

Some idle talk, a bow, and then—
We parted then, to meet, oh! never;
She to forget me ere the morn,
And I to dream of her forever.

For now when moonlight music swells,
Though years have flown, and I am older,
I see the starry eyes again,
And feel the white hand on my shoulder.

RICHMOND, KY., 1889.

THE RUINED ABBEY: OR, THE GIPSEYS OF FOREST HILL.

A ROMANCE OF OLD ENGLAND.

BY DR. J. H. ROBINSON.

CHAPTER I.

HEPSEY HERNE—CORA—GLENBURN—JACK LYND.

IT was long ago, in the olden time, in the reign of Charles the Second. England contained but one-third of its present population. It prided itself upon its extensive forests, its fen and moorland, its arable grounds. The gipsey spread his tent, and the moss trooper slept quietly in his blanket upon the heath, and in the oaken wood where great cities now stand, and where the wheat and the maize now flourish. Glorious days were those for the outlaw and the tramper. The reins of justice were held with a feeble hand. The roads were intolerably bad; traveling was a slow and difficult matter, and vagrants and vagabonds, who trusted to the fleetness of their feet, and their knowledge of the country, had but little to fear. It is true that offenders were often severely and even cruelly handled when caught; but to catch them was not an easy thing. Lords and noble country gentlemen dwelt in fortified castles, and endeavored to mete out justice to those within their jurisdiction. In this they sometimes succeeded, but oftener failed. In many instances the powerful lord was but a rustic clown, rude and unpolished; and it was often the case that his dependents were governed with all the rigor of a complete despotism.

The scenes of our story are laid near Canterbury, in the county of Kent. With these few prefatory remarks, we will proceed.

It was the pleasant month of June. The oak had just put forth its foliage, the spreading beech and the tough ash had budded; the white thorn had blossomed, and the holly grew by the green hedge-rows. The heath flower was seen on the mossy moor;

and the verdant grasses were luxuriating in the dank bogs and meadows. The elder bush and the hazel grew rank on the banks of the streams and rivulets, and the cress crept along the beds of running brooks and stagnant waters.

The sun was sinking into the west; his beams lay along the branches of the trees at Forest Hill, gilding them with fiery glow. The gentle winds that toyed with the green leaves were fragrant with the breath of nature, breathed from sweet flowers, odorous herbs and grasses. Two persons stood near the summit of the hill. Both were females. The eldest was a tall, dark woman, clad in a fantastic manner. Her hair was coarse, long and black, and flowed unrestrained by comb or band; it fell about her neck and shoulders in heavy masses. Her face was wrinkled and swarthy. Her nose was sharp, pinched and long. Her cheek bones were high and regular; her eyes small, black and piercing. When excited, they had the appearance of emitting flashes of light. Her mouth was large, and drawn down at the angles, while the lips were thin, and she had a habit of compressing them, especially when looking fixedly at one. Her figure was gaunt and bony, her fingers and arms long and skinny. She was clad in garments of various colors, some of them being very bright, and others very dingy and faded. A yellow handkerchief was tied about her head, and a ragged remnant of a thin shawl thrown in a curious manner over her shoulders. A plaid skirt, six inches too short, completed her dress.

The companion of this woman was in every respect unlike her. Instead of age, ugliness and wrinkles, she had youth, beauty and fairness. Instead of a figure tall, thin and angular, she had a form of graceful proportions, symmetrical, round and faultless. Instead of the repulsiveness which characterized the hag, she had that peculiar attractiveness calculated to inspire interest at the first glance. Her eyes were dark as the wild looking woman's; but they shot forth no malignant fires; they were mild and sweet in their expression. Her mouth was small, and a model of classic perfection.

The swarthy hag turned sharply to the young girl. She fixed her fierce eyes upon her and scowled angrily.

"You are as faint and timid," she exclaimed, shaking her finger threateningly, "as you are smooth-faced and fair. You are no gipsey at heart. There is not a drop of pure Rommany blood in your veins. At your age I was as bold as the boldest. I could get my own living, which you cannot. I could tell the *ventura;* I could cheat and steal; I could scatter the deadly *daro* in the manger of the Tororo cattle."

The girl shuddered, but dared not reply.

"But why should you do such things, mother?" she ventured to reply. "Could you not have gained a living in some other way?"

"A living in some other way!—ha, ha!" screamed the hag, striking her stick spitefully upon the ground. "Hepsey Herne get a living in some other way! Girl, you will provoke me to beat you. How should a gipsey live, if not by lying, cheating and thieving? Where would the laws of the Callees be, and what would they be good for, if we did not *hokawar* and *chore*? (cheat and steal.) It is bred in the blood and in the bone; it is a part of our nature. But you will never comprehend it, and learn to love it. You are a poor, weak fool, and no better than a gentile. I never can teach you the tricks of our people. I hate you with an intense hatred."

"Say not the cruel words!" cried the girl, falling upon her knees before the hag. "Let your heart relent; let some soft emotions of pity have place in your heart. Am I not your child? Can a mother hate her offspring? Is it human nature?"

"Cringing, contemptible creature!" cried Hepsey Herne. "You know not the nature of the true daughters of Roma—the intensity of their hatred, or depth of their love for the wandering life of the dark Callee."

"People who live by honest industry call us vagrants, vagabonds, cheats, thieves and trampers," said the girl.

"I spit upon them; I defile the graves of their fathers. May evil come upon them in an unexpected moment!" exclaimed Hepsey Herne, in bitterness.

"Why do you thus hate the *Tororo?*" (A word the English gipseys apply to all not of their own race.)

"Why do I hate the Tororo? Why does the grass grow? Why do the waters flow toward the sea? I will answer. Because it is nature."

"Then I am not a true child of Roma," replied the girl. "I love not the sins of my people. I had rather be beaten and shunned, and made wretched, than to practise their

wickedness. I turn with horror from lying and cheating. I shrink from the sight of blood with indescribable fear and disgust. I can labor with my hands; I can be a drudge—the slave of slaves—a creature to be beaten and insulted by everyone, but to practise *hokkano borro* (the great trick), to hokawar and chore, I cannot."

Hepsey Herne lifted her stick over the girl's shoulders. The latter bent her head meekly, and went on:—

"You tell me I am your child—flesh of your flesh, and bone of your bone. But why are our natures so dissimilar? Why do you hate what I love, and love what I hate? It is something strange in nature. If you saw my first smiles of consciousness, heard my first words when the seal of infancy was taken from my tongue, be indeed my mother, let your heart soften towards me. Treat me with less harshness. Permit me to hear, once in a great while, a few words of kindness; or at least of pity. Steel not against me forever the gentle impulses of humanity. Sometimes unbend your brow, sometimes look less fiercely upon me with your eyes; sometimes throw a tithe of human sympathy into the tones of your voice."

"You would move the pity of Hepsey Herne," cried the hag. "Vain thought, vain waste of words. You may melt steel and brass, and you may reduce a flint stone to powder; but you cannot sway the heart of Hepsey Herne. I was born a gipsey, and the planets and fixed stars conjoined and conspired to make me what I am. Child, your skin is too soft; therefore I despise you. If I am your mother, I was made so for my sins. If I gave you being, I curse the day and the hour that brought you into the world. If my sorrows and pains were the passports to your present life, then there was some malignant star in the ascendant; and in being the mother of one like you, I am doubly accursed."

"I have heard you discourse thus dreadfully before, but certainly you cannot mean what you say. Wretched creature that I am."

"If punishment and cruelty can make you know that I mean what I say, then shall you have sufficient proof of my being in earnest."

Hepsey Herne raised her stick, and dealt cruel blows upon the fair person of the maiden.

"Mercy! mercy! spare—spare me!" cried the victim of the hag's vengeance. The voice of the supplicant reached a friendly ear. A tall young man came running to her aid. His eyes were flashing with anger, and his chest was heaving with emotions which he found it impossible to express.

"Hag! witch! devil! what are you doing?" he exclaimed, seizing her arm with a furious grasp, and wrenching away the stick from her. "Why do you beat this poor girl? Why do you make her continually wretched with your causeless cruelty? Sorceress! I am tempted to throw you over yonder cliff."

Hepsey Herne gazed fixedly at the youth a moment, and then laughed as she only could laugh. She then shook him from her with her masculine strength, while her eyes flashed and sparkled like a serpent.

"Go, rash fool!" she shrieked, throwing herself into an attitude, and stretching out her right hand. "Dare my fury no longer. Begone, before I blast you with the lightnings of eyes."

"Are you much hurt?" asked the youth.

"Go; heed me not," replied the maiden. "You can do me no good; you will but bring evil upon yourself."

"Son of a gentile!" continued Hepsey Herne, "foolish meddler, dread my vengeance. What is this weak wench to you? Why should you wince when I strike her? Why should your own flesh quiver as though you felt the blow? Is she not my daughter? Does not the blood of the Callee flow in the veins that go coursing beneath that fair skin?"

"You say she is your child; I know not if it be so. If a lamb may be born of a wolf, she is yours," said the youth.

Turning to the object of his solicitude, he added, in a gentler voice:—

"Cora, can I not protect you? Can I do nothing to alleviate the wretchedness of your condition?"

"Nothing, sir, nothing. I am beyond the reach of aid from you." Hepsey darted a warning look at Cora.

"Besides," resumed the latter, "this good women is not so bad as she seems."

"You cannot disguise the truth, poor girl," replied the youth. "I see but too plainly your situation."

"I am not very wretched," added Cora. "This woman is stern sometimes, and I am not very dutiful; but she loves me."

"Do you hear that?" asked Hepsey, triumphantly.

"Yes, I hear it, and I know why it was spoken," said the bold youth. "It pains my heart to hear lips so fair obliged to utter untruths for one so unworthy."

"You have braved the vengeance of Hepsey Herne," retorted the hag, "and you shall learn to know what you have dared. Young lord of Glenburn, the curses of a sorceress shall follow you wherever you go. Hepsey Herne is wise in the language of the stars. She knows when they conjoin to work evil. She understands the mysteries of the *Cabala*. She can prepare the seal that preserves against the evil chance, and the charm which works destruction. She can draw the circles, and write the potent characters, and sign the sign of the malignant powers of the air, of the earth, of water and of fire. Henceforth, Lord of Glenburn, she marks thee as the object of her cabalistic arts and hatred. Smile if you will, but what is to be will be, and fate will have it so."

Young Glenburn made no answer. The manner of the strange woman awed him and kept him silent.

"I know the name of this hour, and the name of the angel of this hour," added Hepsey Herne. "Lord of Glenburn, tremble at my power. As for this girl, she is mine. I shall do what I wish with her, and it matters not to you. I know what you think—what you would do; I read your secret, and it shall be mine to make your disappointment bitter. Remember my words—they are prophetic: what is to be will be, and fate will have it so."

Hepsey Herne ceased speaking, gazed an instant at the youth, then turning her back upon him, made a gesture to Cora, who cast a grateful look upon him who had befriended her, and walked away with the hag. Glenburn continued to look after them as they descended the hill by a steep and difficult path.

"Gipsey born—the daughter of a gipsey hag!" he said, musingly. "An attractive face, a goodly figure has the maiden they call Cora. But that hag will kill her."

At that moment, young Glenburn received a blow upon his shoulder which nearly prostrated him. Recovering himself, he turned angrily towards the offender, who had approached him from behind, and now stood with clenched fists in the attitude of a boxer.

"How will you have it, sir?" he exclaimed, flourishing his arms about in the spirit of pugilism. "I have all kinds at your service. Will you have some smart rib-ticklers, or the real dry knocks—reg'lar stunners?"

"Who are you, fellow? What means this insolence?" said Glenburn.

"Which did your honor say?—the stunners or the ticklers?" replied the man.

"Answer!" replied Glenburn. "What is your name and purpose?"

"I am called Jack Lynd when I'm wanted, and that's but seldom. My purpose is to give you a reg'lar touch of my science; so come up to the scratch," retorted the intruder.

"Before we proceed to blows, allow me to know for what we are to fight. How have I given cause for offence?" asked Glenburn.

"I'm a man as can fight just as well without a cause as with one; so here goes!" returned Jack Lynd.

"Hold, sir; that's not satisfactory," said Glenburn.

"I saw you startin' after some females; I'm willin' to fight about that; it's all the same to me. How do you know but that's my wife and daughter, sir?"

"I do not, neither do I care," said Glenburn. "All that I can say is, if that tall woman is your wife I don't envy you your situation."

"Don't go for to disparage her, sir. I'm a chap as won't allow female wirtue to be scandalized. Look out for a stunner."

"I came here, strange fellow, to defend innocence, not disparage it; therefore desist. You perceive that I wear a sword. I should be loth to harm you. I am a Glenburn; my father owns these lands."

"Then you are the son of a lord," said Jack Lynd, dropping his belligerent attitude.

"I am."

"I'm werry sorry for that. You look as though you could fight a werry good battle."

"It would seem that you fight for pleasure?"

"It's the only amusement I like, your worship. When the world goes hard with me, and I find it difficult to get a crust of bread, and a little straw to lie on of a night, and nature looks down at the heel, as we say, if I can only have a reg'lar set to, I feel like a new man again. If I was a dyin', sir, I should want to have a little bit of a skrimmage, afore I knocked under."

"I perceive you are an original character. I rather like you."

"I am just as I was made, and don't care to be nothing different."

"You probably belong with those people yonder?" said Glenburn, pointing towards the gispey encampment.

"You mean the trampers. I go with them sometimes; but I don't belong nowhere in particular."

"How do you get a living?"

"By dry knocks and stunners."

"Is it a profitable business?"

"It's not werry profitable, but werry refreshin'."

"Do you know Hepsey Herne?"

"I've seen the animal. Her daughter's a reg'lar stunner. They ain't very well mated, though. When I see 'em I allers think of a hawk and a dove together. I don't think she's over-fond of her. The swarthy folks all seem to be afraid of old Hepsey. I've heard that she beat the little 'un. When I catch her at it, she's in for a stunner. When I lay down at night beside the green hedge-rows I should sleep all the better for it."

"Jack Lynd, here is some money for you. It will keep you in crusts of bread and clean straw for a long time to come. All I ask in return is, that you look after old Hepsey's girl a little, and protect her when she is abused."

"Seein' as how you refuse to fight me, to give me money is the next best thing you could do for me; however, we must try and put up with disappointments. I'll keep an eye on the daughter of that witch-fire, you may depend. But if you would be good enough to take back the money, and just exchange a few knocks with me, I'd consider it a greater inducement."

"I think you must excuse me now; perhaps at some future time I will try it with you," said Glenburn, will a smile.

"It would really be an act of kindness," replied Jack, brightening up. "You are a fine built fellow. Your arm is a long one, and the muscles are as hard as iron. Your young lordship might throw in some of the real 'stonishers. I could make a rum chap of you. I will go up to the castle some day and give you a touch of science, as you can learn only on the roads."

"Thank you; and when you come, be sure and bring me word how the girl gets on with her mother."

"I'll do it with pleasure, your lordship. It's many a long day since I've fingered so much money, for as I was sayin', knockin' and stunnin' isn't werry profitable, though werry refreshin'."

Waving his hand, Glenburn turned from his new acquaintance, and pursued his way homewards, with many strange thoughts in his mind.

CHAPTER II.

ISADORE—HARDWICK.

THE sun had kissed the soft dews from the grass. The breath of the morning winds was redolent with sweetness and health. A young lady was walking towards Forest Hill. In figure she was somewhat taller than the daughter of Hepsey Herne. She was richly attired, and evidently of gentle "blood," if one may be permitted to judge of such matters from dress and bearing. Her face and features were as unlike Cora's as they could well be, but they could not be called less attractive. She was a brunette, and nearly as dark as a gipsey. Decision and energy were marked upon every lineament. The lips had that peculiar formation which so unerringly indicates firmness of character. The eyes, though not very large, were exceedingly lustrous, and might be said to possess a certain wildness of expression. Her hair, the rich glossiness of which corresponded with her complexion, was unusually long and abundant, and hung in heavy curls about her neck. As she moved forward her step was proud and firm. Her person seemed wanting in no requisite of feminine beauty. Foot, hand and ankle were as diminutive as aristocracy could desire, or symmetry of proportions demand.

She paused when she reached Forest Hill. Below her on one side was a deep valley, through which flowed a brook. The wandering descendants of the Egyptians were encamped there. Their tents, sheds and huts were teeming with life; the owners were already astir.

"Fair lady, do I behold you once more?" said a young man, coming forth from the shelter of the trees.

"I would be alone!" said the maiden, with dignity, pointing towards a path which led in a different direction.

"Lady, you scorn me. I expected that you would," replied the intruder.

"You are right, presuming youth; the

daughter of Dunalstein scorns you!" returned the lady.

"For the sake of looking upon you for a moment, I am willing to feel even your scorn," replied the youth.

"Your way lies yonder," said the maiden.

"The sun, proud Isadore, is glorious; but the meanest creature may bask in its light. Beauty is glorious, and may I not presume to gaze upon it?" replied the other, earnestly.

"Go down there among your own people, and you can gaze without giving offence."

"You despise me, daughter of Dunalstein, because I belong to a hated and wandering race. But think not that I regret the fate that made me a gipsey. No, no! I love those of the blood, and I scorn the gentile."

"Why, then, do you intrude upon me, when I would be alone?" asked Isadore, quickly.

"Because you differ from all your race that I have seen. I see in your flashing eyes, in your bold spirit and firm step, something to remind me of my own people."

"You are complimentary, my swarthy friend," said Isadore, with a smile.

"I feel the taunt, proud Isadore; you imagine there can be nothing fair or lovable among the children of Roma."

"Your customs are horrible."

"They may be so to you, but to us they are second nature. We love the hills, the valleys, the fen, the field, the moorland and forests. We love freedom. We love to wander from place to place, make our own laws, and to be a distinct people. All these things we have been taught, until they have become a portion of our being. You were differently instructed, and your heart yearns for other things, which you esteem desirable. Are you to be blamed for what you have been taught?—and if you are not to be blamed for what you have been taught, am I?"

"Flimsy reasoning, sir."

"And yet you seemed to listen with interest. Your eyes lighted up when I spoke of the hills, the valleys and fields."

"All fancy, I can assure you. What cares the daughter of Dunalstein for you or your people? Stuff and nonsense!"

"Then you love not freedom?"

"Not such unlicensed freedom as yours. Why do you not leave those vagrants and learn something better? It is possible that you might in time become respected and beloved."

"No, lady, no," said the gipsey, solemnly. "I was born what I am, and never can be any different. It is in my flesh, and in my blood, and in my bones. It is my nature; it will live still with me, and it will die with me. The leopard cannot change his spots."

Isadore made no rejoinder, but looked steadily towards the tents in the valley.

"Lady, you change color; you are agitated. What moves you?"

"Nay, I am not agitated. I am very calm."

"Then you cannot look with complacency upon one so much below you in worldly condition. You cannot unbend your pride; you cannot feel the promptings of a gentle compassion. Look upon me! Have I not the manly attributes of one of your own people? Does my figure lack manliness or symmetry of proportion? Does my arm want strength? Has my face no excellence of feature? Is there no persuasion in my voice? Has my mind no power? Is my intellect weak and puny? Speak! why should I excite such scorn? Why should those lips curl with disdain, those eyes flash with contempt?"

"Is your presumption, then, so great that you expect words of encouragement, or looks of compassion from me?"

"You pride yourself upon your rank. Is the difference then so great between us? Your father is a lord; mine is a count."

"And is that all the difference, sir? Can you forego your detestable habits? Can you wash your skin white?" said Isadore, breathing hard, and struggling to be firm.

"You are pleased, lady, to refer to my complexion. Is the difference in that so remarkable?"

"What, sir?" exclaimed Isadore.

"I have heard it observed—nay, do not frown thus—that your cheek is nearly as dark as mine."

"How dare you insult me, base son of a base people!" returned Isadore, but in a voice indicating as much grief as anger.

"Daughter of Dunalstein, I would not insult you to save my life; I would peril it to protect you from insult. Among all your admirers there is not one who loves you with half my devotion. There is not one who would dare so much for you. There is not one so disinterested. There is not one more capable of a noble passion; not one who scorns me more than I scorn him; and there is no one more proud."

The gipsey youth spoke with enthusiasm,

and his cheeks glowed with excitement. He stood erect, proud, manly and handsome. The daughter of Dunalstein gazed on him with wonder. A strange fascination held her to the spot.

"Daughter of a powerful lord," resumed the gipsey, in a voice still firm, but respectful, "we part now; but the stars say we shall meet again."

"Wayward youth; believe not the stars," replied Isadore, in a tone less cold. "The stars may light your pathway at night, and the moon may look down upon you, sleeping, through the crevices of your tent; but more they cannot do."

"The planets are a mystery and a wonder; they speak a language which the wise understand. Without the moon, and stars, and planets, there would be no upheavings and downgoings of the sea; the grass would not grow, the trees would not bud and blossom, the grains and esculent roots would never germinate and bring forth after their kind. There is no inherent virture, no life-giving principle in the soil of the cold earth we live upon. The fertilizing breath that develops life, both animal and vegetable, descends from above by the agency of the planets. Is it not so, maiden of Dunalstein?"

"Something like that, I acknowledge; but I am not much of a philosopher."

"I will intrude no longer upon your retirement."

"Stay one moment. Am I then as dark as your people?"

"Be not offended at my freedom; there is one among us whose skin is fairer than your own."

"What is her name, sir?"

"They call her Cora. She is a daughter of Hepsey Herne."

"A tall woman, tawny and frantic?"

"You describe her well."

"She has a fierce eye, a ready tongue, and dabbles in sorcery?"

"The same."

"A strange personage—a wild woman. Her daughter is more beautiful than the daughter of Dunalstein?"

"Not more beautiful, but her skin is fairer. Proud maiden, I go; forget not Joseph Abershaw, the handsomest youth in England."

Joseph Abershaw touched his hat gracefully, and walked away with the independent air of a governor of provinces.

"The handsomest youth in England. Vain fellow!" said Isadore. "But who comes here? It is Hepsey Herne. Her step is firm, and she has lost none of her pride since I last saw her. That woman affects me strangely; yet I cannot say that I fear her."

Hepsey Herne approached. She paused, leaning on her stick, before Isadore. She put forth her skinny hand, ran her fingers through her black hair, patted her upon the cheek and smiled.

"What does the child of the Tororo here?" she asked, in a friendly voice.

"I love the open fields, tawny mother, hence I came here to walk."

"It is a good thing to love the fields; I am glad you love the fields. You are a sweet young lady, a fair young lady; there is a *bon* fortune in store for you. But you'll have reverses; everybody has reverses; and all pass through some sorrow to obtain much happiness. I can read your destiny in a *gabicota* (book). I know the *cabala*. A learned man taught it to me, my little *chabori* (girl). I can see in the crystal, and I can find out what the stars say. A learned man taught me that, also. Hold out your fair hand, sister, and let the wise woman look at the lines."

Hepsey Herne took the hand of Isadore, held it in both hers and kissed it.

"You are still the same," said the maiden.

"The same to you—the same to you. Do not fear, pretty lady, dark-skinned lady; the tawny woman will not hurt you. She loves the child of the great lord, because the child of the great lord loves the fields, valleys and hills, the meadows and streams."

"Where have you been since I last met you?"

"I have been tramping; tramping to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west. I have slept on the heath; I have drunk from the streams; I have told the good fortune; I have played all kinds of tricks with the gentiles. I have consulted the stars for thee, and the dark spirits that tell the future. The signs and the influences were all propitious, for the moon was on the increase, and the spirits of earth, air, fire and water would be inquired of, and were compelled to the truth. Listen to the riddle which contains the secret of thy life:—

When that which seems to be is not,
And that which was shall be forgot,
When two are lost, and one is saved—

And the enslaver is enslaved;
When shame is bought and virture sold—
Then, lady, shall thy fate be told.
The riddle read, it will be plain
That gain is loss and loss is gain.

"It appears to me that the language of the fates is not a little obscure and dark," said Isadore.

"Because the seal of the angel of the hour is upon it. Be content; the seal cannot be broken at present. That which is to be will be, and fate will have it so. Hepsey Herne has said it."

Hepsey passed once more her fingers through the redundant tresses of Isadore, stroked her fair cheeks with her horny palm, and then strode away towards the huts in the valley.

"Why am I attached to these wild people?" asked Isadore. "Why does the name of gipsey awake such sensations in my bosom? I never see them tramping across the moor, or climbing the hills, or encamped in the dingle, but I wish to be near them. And this Joseph Abershaw! I think I'll walk towards the castle of Dunalstein."

Among the admirers of Isadore was the Lord of Hardwick, a distant relative of her father. The latter had favored his suit, and he had become a favored visitor at Dunalstein. He was the owner of a large estate, and was considered an eligible match by all the neighboring fathers for their marriageable daughters. But he had failed to make any favorable impression upon the heart of Isadore. She was not pleased with him, neither did she affect to be pleased with him; for she was too proud to stoop to deception. His advances she had taken but little notice of, and in fact troubled herself but little about them. She had hitherto regarded Henry of Hardwick as a good-natured sort of person, of narrow habits of thought, and possessed of an intellect rather wanting in force and energy. As for personal attractions, she had persuaded herself that he had none.

She had proceeded but a short distance on her return homeward, before she met the subject of this brief description.

"I have been seeking you this hour," said Hardwick.

"And you have found me; what next?" replied Isadore, coldly.

"The fact is, my fair cousin, I have news for you," said Hardwick, in his usual drawling manner.

"I bid you welcome, then. News has been rather scarce lately. We don't get the *London Gazette* very regularly, you know."

"You couldn't learn what I am going to tell you from the *London Gazette*, Cousin Isadore."

"Well, let us hear it before it becomes stale."

"Your excellent father, the powerful lord of Dunalstein, informs me that you are about to be married."

"Indeed! And to whom?"

"To your worthy cousin, Henry Hardwick, of Hardwick castle."

Isadore paused, looked at Hardwick a moment, and then laughed merrily.

"How is this, Isadore?" exclaimed Hardwick. "It seems to me that you receive this announcement after a very singular fashion. Do you consider the idea so very facetious, then?"

"I regard it as wholly unworthy a serious thought. When next you propose matrimony, take my advice, and first ascertain whether the maiden honored with your preference is willing to accede to your wishes. Such a course will save you some trouble and much mortification."

The lord of Hardwick was confounded. It had never entered his sapient head that Isadore would reject him. It was a contingency which he had set down on the list of impossibilities. Refuse a man of such vast consequence in point of worldly wealth, and of such attractions of person! Who could have dreamed of such a thing?

"Really, Miss Dunalstein, you are in an extraordinary humor to-day," returned Hardwick, petulantly.

"Understand me, Henry of Hardwick. Let this subject be settled now and forever. I never will marry you. I do not seek to wound your feelings; I only wish to undeceive you. You have not those attributes which the man of my choice must possess."

"Is this the answer I am to bear to Dunalstein?" asked Hardwick, trembling with passion.

"It is."

"Consider again; reflect one moment."

"Not a second."

"Will you condescend to inform me what attributes the man of your choice must possess?" asked Hardwick, sarcastically.

"First of all, a noble soul," replied Isadore, with dignity.

"Go on—a noble soul!"

"A manly figure, a commanding air, a fearless heart, and a strong arm."

"And is Henry Hardwick wanting in all these qualifications?"

"Go, sir; I do not wish to offend. Forget the past, and let us meet on friendly terms as hitherto."

"Forget the past? Never!" exclaimed Hardwick, seizing Isadore by the arm, roughly. "You shall feel and know what it is to insult me. I will"——

"Here's a real 'stonisher for you—a reg'lar stunner!" cried a voice, and the lord of Hardwick fell prostrate to the ground, and the figure of Jack Lynd was seen standing over him with clenched fists.

"Plenty more, sir, of that kind; punishers, pain-killers, ear-openers, eye-blinders, rib-ticklers, 'stonishers, claret starters, wet knocks, dry knocks, and stunners," said Jack Lynd.

"Who in the deuce are you?" exclaimed Hardwick, rising himself upon one elbow, with an expression of rage and defeat highly ludicrous. Isadore burst into a loud laugh.

"Female wirtue is sacred, sir."

"Well, what has that to do with this unprovoked attack?"

"A pretty question to ask. What for did you go for to take this young lady by the arm?"

"She's my cousin, scoundrel!"

"She's *wirtue*, sir; and when you took her by the arm, you insulted wirtue; that's the long and short of it. So get up, and use your bruisers, and we'll see who's the best man. I've got 'em, sir—raps, wipes, backhanders, fore-and-afters, sweeteners, head-softeners, not forgettin' wet knocks, dry knocks and stunners."

"Then you are my champion?" said Isadore.

"I am, pretty lady. I'm the awenger of wirtue. Get up, you hardened willain."

Hardwick recovered his feet, burning with rage and mortification.

"I suppose I may thank you for this, Miss Dunalstein. I have a good memory—an excellent memory—I'll not forget; be assured I will not. And as for this insolent hind, if I had my side arms, I would make an example of him. The incidents of this hour have given my heart to vengeance. Isadore, I give you fair warning; henceforth I am your enemy."

"Stand on your defence—up with your mawlers—look out for your top-lights!"

"Hold!" cried Isadore. "I am satisfied; you have done enough."

"But wirtue must be awenged, ma'am."

"There is blood on his lordship's face," said Isadore, still smiling, "and when blood has been shed, it is generally accounted satisfactory among men of honor."

Isadore turned to Hardwick and held out her hand.

"Come, Henry, you know I did not and could not forsee this. Here is my hand. Forget this ludicrous scene."

"Never!"

"Take it, your lordship, or I'll give you a stunner," said Jack, doubling his fists.

"Not so fast, my friend," continued Isadore. "I will not force his lordship to a reconciliation. As he refuses to be reconciled, you shall be my gallant to the castle." She turned from Hardwick, adding as she did so:—

"Remember, sir, that I did not seek a quarrel. I cherish no unkindness towards you." Hardwick bit his lips, and made no reply. Isadore motioned to Jack Lynd, and he followed her with a highly gratified air.

"Who is Joseph Abershaw?" she asked, when they had reached the castle.

"He's a rum chap, ma'am—a reg'lar stunner."

"And you're a stunner, too," he added to himself, as she disappeared in the court.

CHAPTER III.

THE FLIGHT—DUNALSTEIN.

"Cora," said Hepsey Herne, "you must go up to the castle and tell the good fortune to the lord of Dunalstein. I have got you a new red cloak, a jaunty skirt, and a nice gipsey hat. Go and tell him that the stars have spoken to the child of the wise woman. He's the same who gave you the silver when you was a wee bit of a girl."

"I'm not used to such great people," replied Cora, "and I shall not know what to say."

Hepsey shook her stick, and frowned fiercely upon her daughter.

"Don't rebel; don't make excuses; don't work me into a fury; but put on those fine things and begone."

"You know, mother, that I am not as handy as the *buena ventura*," said Cora, timidly.

"Shall I beat you?" screamed Hepsey,

"Shall I make some more ugly marks upon those dainty shoulders?"

Trembling with fear, Cora put on the new garments, while to facilitate the process, the hag gave her an occasional push, or uttered some bitter reproach.

"You were born to be a great lady, and not to work and get your living like other honest people. You're not made of common clay, by no means; but of porcelain, or some such thing. You're too good to do as we do. You must sit moping and pining all day. But I'll learn you a trick worth two of that. You shall learn to *howakar* and *chore* the Tororo. Now away with you, and don't come back till you have seen the lord of Dunalstein."

With a heavy heart poor Cora went forth upon the mission so hateful to her. To escape the harsh, grating tones of the hag, she walked hastily from the encampment. When she had passed out of sight of the spot, she sat down and wept.

"Why have I lived?" she exclaimed. "Why has my lot been cast among such a people? When fate willed me to be one of such a race, why had it not in mercy given me the same instincts; but they were withheld. I experience no pleasure in wandering from place to place. This wild freedom gives me no joy. My soul shrinks with unutterable disgust from the rude, wild dance, and the sight and sound of frantic revelry. The terrible law which teaches me to live by wronging others fills me with terror. The past makes me shudder, the future appals me."

Cora arose and went on until she came to some clear water.

"That fearful woman reproaches me because I am unlike her in complexion. I will look at myself in this water." The young gipsey examined herself as she was reflected in the water. "The contrast is indeed striking," she said; "but the contrast is as great physically as morally. If I am unlike in form, feature and complexion, I am as much unlike my people in my instincts. Whatever nature intended me for, it was not to be a gipsey. Why then should I stay among them? Can my condition be made more miserable? Can another drop of misery be added to the overflowing cup of my wretchedness? Can I find another heart more hard and unrelenting than Hepsey Herne's? I will be free. I will fly from such degradation. I will die by the wayside rather than return. Death is less cruel than that woman. It is possible that there are kind and gentle hearts somewhere in the world. It is possible that there are those who will love and care for me. I have had such thoughts in dreaming and in waking. I have seen smiles on friendly faces, and heard tones in whose softness there was magic. This cannot be all fancy. There must be some power in nature that whispers the truth to the despairing soul. Great Being, who protectest the oppressed and hopeless, give energy to my heart, wisdom to my mind, and strength to my feet. Guide me to some place of safety and peace. Direct me to those, if such exist, who shall speak kindly to me, and soften down the asperities of an unloved existence."

Cora arose and proceeded on her way. Away to the right, upon a high eminence, the towers of Dunalstein were visible. Further on, and more to the left, lay the estates of Glenburn. She decided to keep on towards Dunalstein, so that, should she be seen by any of her people, her purpose might not be mistrusted. She had crossed the moor and was near the castle, when she saw a female figure approaching. Cora would have turned aside, but the figure made gestures for her to advance. It was Isadore. The two stood face to face.

"So you are one of the trampers?" said Isadore, gazing earnestly.

"I belong to those people in the valley," replied Cora, meekly.

"And you are as much unlike them in complexion as you can well be. You have not the swarthy features of the Rommany girl; but I dare say you have learned their tricks," continued Isadore.

"I am a gipsey, fair lady, dark-skinned lady, and the daughter of the wise woman," said Cora, adoping the habits and manner of speech which she had been taught.

"Why do you call me dark-skinned lady?" asked Isadore.

"I don't know why I call you so; I speak the language of the wise people."

"Am I then so dark?" asked Isadore, eagerly.

Cora looked up into the face of Miss Dunalstein, and continued to gaze as if she were spell-bound.

"Am I then so dark?" repeated Isadore.

"Yes, lady, dark as the descendants of the Egyptians; dark, but beautiful!"

"And you are"——

"Of a fair complexion. Nature gave me a whiter skin, but less beauty, lady."

"Nay, you wrong yourself. You have a very handsome face, and a charming person."

"The danghter of the Tororo flatters the poor chabori. Hark, and the child of the wise woman will repeat what the fates have written in a *gabicote* (book):—

When that which seems to be is not,
And that which was shall be forgot,
When two are lost, and one is saved,
And the enslaver is enslaved,
When shame is bought, and virtue sold,
Then, lady, shall thy fate be told.
This riddle read, it shall be plain
That gain is loss, and loss is gain."

"The very lines which old Hepsey repeated," said Isadore. "Do you know their meaning?" she asked.

"The lines are a mystery to me. My mother says they contain the secret of a life," rejoined Cora.

"I know not why it is, but I never see one of your people without emotion," added Isadore.

"Do not seek them; they will do you no good," said Cora, in a voice sunk almost to a whisper.

"I've heard you are a dangerous people," returned Isadore.

"It is true—too true," replied Cora, with much energy.

"Who is Joseph Abershaw?" asked Isadore.

"The son of the count, or captain of the clan. I know but little of him. I have heard him called the handsomest youth among us. Farewell, dark-skinned lady; the business of Egypt calls me away. I must be walking over the field, fen and moor."

"What do you mean by the business of Egypt?"

"Any secret business which concerns us is so called."

"Here is a purse of silver for you."

"Thank you. Much good will it do me."

Cora took the money and passed on her way. The castle of Dunalstein was soon far behind her, and she was on the road leading to Rochester. Urged forward by terror and the hope of escaping a thraldom so degrading, she exerted herself to the utmost. She was aware that by this act she would provoke the anger of old Hepsey past forgiveness. Should she be pursued and overtaken, her lot would become more wretched, if possible, than before. She passed huts and cottages, but shunned their inmates. They might say they had seen her on the road, and thus assist Hepsey Herne in her efforts to find her.

The towers of Dunalstein faded in the distance. Forest Hill was dimly seen, faintly defined upon the horizon, and finally that faded from her vision, too. Cora redoubled her efforts, casting many glances of terror backward upon the way she had trodden in her flight. Every sound disturbed her, and every human figure that she saw caused her heart to beat with fresh alarm. Each additional step gave rise to some additional fear. To increase her trepidation she heard the clatter of horse's feet. The thought occurred to her that it might be some one to take her back to Hepsey Herne; but the idea was soon dissipated; the horseman made his appearance in another direction, and came on at a rapid pace.

Cora recognized him at a glance. It was the lord of Dunlastein, whom she had frequently seen at Forest Hill, in conversatoin with her mother. Upon her visit to that place, when she was some two years younger, she had often met him in her rambles, and been greeted with a kind word and a smile. Though she had never spoken with him, and had received his passing notice with characteristic timidity, she had never shrunk from him with that fear which she always felt at the approach of strangers. In fact she was attracted towards him rather than repelled, until his last visit at the encampment.

On that occasion he had talked much with Hepsey, and followed all her movements with his eyes. She had seen nothing sinister in his fixed and earnest looks, but it was the changed manner of Hepsey that had alarmed her. She perceived plainly that the lord of Dunalstein was being deceived in some way or another, and that the former was acting in accordance with some fixed plan. When, therefore, she had been ordered to go up to the castle and tell the "good fortune" to Dunalstein, she felt an unconquerable repugnance to doing so.

He reined up his horse beside our heroine. He was a man considerably advanced in life, perhaps fifty years of age; but time had not been hard with him, and had left imprinted upon his brow less than the usual number of furrows. He was of a commading person, and his lips wore continually a placid and benevolent smile.

Cora smiled, courtesied, and would have passed on.

"Stay one moment," said Dunalstein. "I have noticed you often," he continued. "Your manners and complexion are strangely at variance with those with whom you are associated. I know your mother as a frantic woman, who dabbles in sorcery. Now tell me, and truly, if you understand all the wicked tricks of your people? Do you *hokawar* and *chore*, do you tread the wild dance, more frantic than graceful; do you sing the rude Rommany songs, more boisterous than musical?"

"I assure your lordship that I do not; such things are hateful to me."

"Your earnest and artless manner bears witness to your sincerity," continued Dunalstein.

Cora gave him a bashful but grateful look.

"Weary yourself no longer by walking these rough roads. Your feet are too small and tender. Give me your hand, and spring to the saddle with me. I will carry you safely to Forest Hill."

"I thank your lordship; but I am traveling in an opposite direction," said Cora, naively.

"And why should one like you be walking, friendless and lonely, up and down the country?" replied Dunalstein, kindly. "Is there no one to care for you, no friend to make you happy with kind words and gentle usage?"

"Not one," said the maiden, "not one. I am both poor and friendless. I belong to a people with whom I have no sympathy; whose habits I can never learn."

"Is that tawny woman unkind to you?" asked Dunalstein, gently. "Is not your way through life cheered by motherly affection?"

"Let these marks bear silent witness," said Cora, suffering the short gipsey cloak to fall partially from her neck and shoulders.

"Forgive me, fair maiden, if my manner has seemed unkind!" exclaimed Dunalstein, in an altered voice. "How can I serve you?"

"You can do nothing for me, my lord, but suffer me to go on my way, and escape the persecution of that cruel women who calls herself my mother. You are very good, and your friendly words make my heart bound with hope," said Cora.

"I do feel and have felt," added Dunalstein, "a strange interest in your people. There are passages in the history of my own life that are intimately connected with them, and which I never recall without a sigh and a tear. Take these golden pieces. Nay, start not; they are freely given. If ever you should be in want, do not fear to come to me. I will not repulse you."

Cora expressed her thanks in the best manner possible, and could not repress her emotions. Dunalstein regarded her gateful embarrassment with evident interest, and while she stood, still undecided about taking as much money, he gave his horse the rein and resumed his way towards the castle. The eyes of the gipsey girl were streaming with tears when she went on her unknown way again.

She now left the frequented road, and traveled by obscure ways and by-paths; crossed moors and meadows, and climbed hills. Weary and hungry, when night came, she lay down in an outhouse upon some dry straw. She had sunk into a sound sleep, when a woman discovered her, called her a thievish tramper, and drove her away with threats. With fluttering steps Cora went forward again. Seeing no habitation near, she sat down behind a green hedgerow, and was soon fast asleep, so exhausted were the powers of nature by fasting and walking. She had slept an hour, perhaps, and was dreaming of a new home in some distant country, when a noise like the fall of some heavy body to the earth awakened her.

She sprang up in alarm, and gazed wildly about, and then the remembrance of her situation returned with vividness. The cause of her affright was directly before her, just over the hedge. A horse had fallen with his rider, and both lay upon the ground. The latter had been thrown violently over the head of the animal, and was stretched upon the heather, stunned and quite senseless.

The horse instantly recovered his feet, and began to eat tender grass by the wayside; but his master gave no indication of consciousness. Cora ran to him. He lay with his face upward, very still and pale. She stooped to raise his head; but uttered a cry of surprise when she recognized the young lord of Glenburn, the gallant youth who had once interfered to save her from the cruelty of Hepsey Herne. What should she do? She heard at a little distance the running of water. Taking Glenburn's hat she ran to the rivulet, brought it full of the

precious fluid, and dashed it on his face. This she repeated, and he soon gave indication of returning animation. Cora exerted her strength and raised him to a sitting posture. He sighed, opened his eyes, put his hand to his head, and endeavored to see who was aiding him. Perceiving that he was able to sit without assistance, and believing that he was not seriously injured, Cora stole softly from his side and hid herself in a copse near the hedge. In a little time Glenburn arose to his feet, looked about him for the person who had aided him, and manifested surprise.

"I thought some one was near me," he said thoughtfully. "I imagined that a hand, like the hand of a woman, was laid gently upon my face; but I preceive that I am alone."

With these words Glenburn walked towards his horse, mounted without difficulty, and rode away. Cora looked after him as long as she could see him, and then went back to the place where she had slept beside the hedge, with her heart somewhat lightened with having done good to a fellow-being. In thinking that she had rendered a service to Glenburn, she forgot half her own wretchedness. She would soon have been wrapt in the sweet sleep of innocence, had not new objects of alarm excited her fears.

She heard persons approaching, talking earnestly together. They sat down on the other side of the hedge and kept on conversing. They used the slang of the roads, which Cora had heard before. Their language was such that it made her tremble for her safety. They were planning a robbery. She felt her blood grow chilly with horror as they went on. She dared not make the slightest movement, and feared her respiration might betray her.

"He goes to collect his rents to-morrow," said one of the ruffians. "He will cross the Black Moor on his return, and go through the oak dingle, where we *did* for the peddler. We will lay in wait for him there, rap him over the sconce, and take the swag."

"But a crack game like that must be done mighty nice; for it's seldom we *do* for a great lord, like him," replied another.

"What's a Glenburn?" exclaimed a third rascal. "A Glenburn is no better than a poor body who gets his living by his hands. Down with him, I say, and lift the dust!"

At hearing the name of Glenburn, Cora gave an involuntary start.

"What's that!" exclaimed one of the robbers.

"The conscience of a rogue," replied he who had spoken. "It's queer how many sounds a roadster will hear when he's got a good deal on his conscience."

"A covey must live in some way, conscience or no conscience," returned the other. "But about this Glenburn; is it agreed to *do* for him in the oak dingle, or on the Black Moor?"

"All agreed," replied his companions. They then went into the details of the proposed robbery, while Cora listened with breathless attention. When all was arranged to their satisfaction they arose and went their way, much to the listener's relief. She was now greatly at a loss to know what course to pursue. Should she continue her flight, or return to warn Glenburn of his danger, and incur the risk of falling into the hands of Hepsey Herne—the most terrible fate she could conceive of? She felt grateful to Glenburn; more than grateful; he had made an impression upon her young heart which years could not efface, with all their changes, even should they prove as miserable as the past. He had stepped boldly forward to save her from punishment and redress her wrongs. And should she not hazard something for him? But it was the bitterest trial of her unhappy life to turn and retrace her footsteps towards the spot made fearful by the hag who had made her wretched since her earliest recollections.

Selfishness said, "go forward, and escape bondage and misery"; but duty boldly bade her "return and warn the young lord" of the evil that menaced him. She resolved to obey the voice of duty. When this resolution was formed, she sank into a sound sleep, and did not wake until the sun was up in the morning.

Bathing her face and hands in the rivulet, with a sigh she turned her face towards Glenburn, which she had left far behind in her flight of the previous day. She had proceeded but a short distance, when she saw two men before her, who were presently joined by a third. She was too near to attempt to avoid them, and, thinking it possible that they were honest laborers, Cora continued on her way. She was passing them, when one spoke to the other, saying:—

"She's a tidy built 'un, ain't she?"

"She's dressed gipsey," he replied; "but too good-looking for a tramper."

Cora recognized the voices of both; they were the robbers who planned the robbery the night before. They now whispered a moment among themselves; then one of them left his companions and walked beside her, treating her to much coarse language.

"You are one of the gipsies, I perceive," he said, insolently, "and your people always contrive to get money in some way, if it isn't over honest. Perhaps you have got a few shillings about you that you could part with as well as not."

"Yes, a shilling for each!" cried the others, joining their companion.

Cora instantly produced the piece of money which Isadore had given her, hoping to save the purse which Dunalstein had forced upon her.

"There must be more where this shining piece came from," added he who had first spoken. "Come, my pretty maiden, bring it forth. We are honest fellows, and need it."

Cora hesitated, but the robbers growing clamorous and imperious in their demands, she was about to comply with their wishes, and part with the little gold which Dunalstein had kindly bestowed upon her, when Jack Lynd leaped in among the robbers with the agility of a cat, and the ferocity of an infuriated lion.

"Here's some reg'lar stunners for ye!" he exclaimed, knocking one in one direction, and another in another. "I'm the awenger o' wirtue! What for did you go for to insult this purty critter, who never done ye no harm in her life. Here's a punisher, here's a dry knock, here's a bruiser, here's a claret starter, here's a side-winder, and here's a stunner."

Jack Lynd bestirred himself so effectually that the robbers were soon all down, and as fast as one attempted to rise, he dealt him a blow which prostrated him again. When he had wearied himself with his exertions, he permitted them to go, one at a time.

Cora had fainted, and lay insensible upon the earth. Jack took her in his arms and ran to the nearest brook. In his trepidation he deluged her face with water enough to suffocate her, under ordinary circumstances. His good intentions were now rewarded by the desired result—Cora sighed, opened her eyes, and came quite to herself. Her first care was to thank her benefactor.

"You're an onhappy young critter!" said Lynd, wiping a tear from his eye. "What's the matter of ye? What for do you go for to look so miserable allers, when I see you with that old witch-wife, Hepsey Herne? Speak out, pretty little lady, and don't be afeared on me."

Pleased with his frank and honest manner, Cora told him the story of her wretchedness.

"Look at me!" he exclaimed, when she had finished her narrative; "look at me, and see one as will stick by you through thick and thin; one as will follow you like a dog, as long as he can do you any good; one as will feed you when you are hungry, and warm you when you're cold; one as will fight for you till he drops down; one as will play the mischief with old Hepsey Herne."

"Then you will really be my friend!" cried Cora, joyfully.

"Stun me, if I don't!" said Jack.

"How nice that will be!" she exclaimed, taking Jack's great hand in both of her small ones. "How nice it will be to have a *friend!*"

"Didn't you ever have one?" asked Jack.

"Never," said Cora.

"But you'd better not say you haven't got one now," he returned, energetically. "Nobody had better say that, unless"——

"They want a stunner," said Cora, smiling.

"Just so."

"And you will"——

"Be like your brother, perwidin' you had one. And now," continued Jack, "I must leave you in some safe place, while I go to tell Glenburn about them are willains as are goin' to lift his dust. By the way, the young lord has taken a shine to you, like; he gave me some money, and told me to keep my eye on you, and see if old Hepsey abused and beat you."

"Did he?" asked Cora, with a blush.

"That's what he did," was the rejoinder.

Cora's new, and it would seem her only friend, conducted her to the ruins of an old abbey. A portion of the ruins were still habitable, and to that part Jack Lynd conducted his fair protege, and then went to procure food. He returned, after a short absence, completely successful.

"I've passed many a night hereabouts," he said; "and I will show you how to fasten the door of this dusty room, if you should have unwelcome visitors; and where to hide if worst should come to worst." After giving her such instructions as he thought necessary, he set out for Glenburn castle, to warn the young lord of his danger.

[To be continued.]

QUEER CASES.

BY A SURGEON.

WHAT is more troublesome to surgeon or patient than a needle broken off short in the flesh—unless it be two broken needles? Such articles "travel" terribly. There is so little to lay hold of with the forceps, that any touch which does not effect its extraction is bound to give it an onward impulse. Thus it often happens that a medical practitioner can find no trace of the needle, when his assistance is sought, the patient having already pushed it completely in, in his efforts to withdraw it; and it may become a matter of doubt whether such a thing is really underneath the skin or not. To cut open the flesh on a mere chance of finding it would be obviously unjustifiable; examination of the part by pressure and squeezing is nearly as bad, from the risk of making matters worse; so an ingenious plan has been devised for ascertaining whether a portion be really impacted or not. A powerful magnet is held upon that part of the body for a quarter of an hour, so as to influence the fragment; then a finely-hung polarized needle is suspended over it, when, if any iron be present, deflection will ensue. In Italy, a kind of ivory probe traversed by two wires has been used for the detection of foreign bodies of this nature in a deep wound, it being connected with an electric battery in such a way that directly the probe comes in contact with anything metallic, the circuit is completed, and its presence announced by the ringing of a bell!

Not many years ago, a remarkable experiment was tried at the Hopital dos Lazaros, Sao Christovao, near Rio de Janeiro. A Brazilian physician pretended to have discovered that "beriberi," the mysterious and deadly malady of that country, half-dropsy, half-leprosy, was identical with the true Elephantiasis Græcorum, which the ancient exponents of the healing art used to cure by inoculations of snake-venom. An inmate of the hospital, knowing his state to be hopeless as it stood, consented to allow the trial to be made on his body. So a vigorous rattlesnake was accordingly brought to his bedside, and made to bite his swollen and hypertrophied hand, in the presence of a large number of doctors, both native and foreign. It was noted at the time that the reptile displayed great apparent reluctance to use its fangs, and it was not until after much irritation that it could be induced to strike. The punctures were inflicted near the base of the little finger; but the patient was not aware that he had been bitten till the bystanders told him, so lifeless was the part. For some hours no results were apparent; the characteristic evidences of blood-poisoning nevertheless set in, and before night the man was a corpse.

The case excited a great deal of interest at the time; but the experiment has never been repeated; nor is there any reason why it should be. The reception of the venom into a mass of fibroid and degenerate tissue such as would compose a leprous limb, would retard and might altogether prevent its absorption into the current of the circulation; while it was pure fancy to attribute the snake's hesitation in biting to anything connected with the disease. Many poisonous reptiles will bear much annoyance, and even ill-treatment, before they can be persuaded to use their fangs; and the case in question really presents no anomalies whatever beyond those to be readily accounted for by the exciting circumstances. But what a marvelous thing the venom of a serpent is! In the whole range of pathology, probably nothing presents such an instance of small causes producing great effects. An infinitesimal quantity of a clear, apparently harmless fluid, introduced by a puncture no bigger than the prick of a pin, and with awful rapidity—a few minutes, it may be—a strong man becomes lifeless clay, already far on its way to decomposition. Perhaps the "germs"—if such really exist—of deadly fevers and other maladies might be found to be just as insignificant in amount, could they be isolated; but it must be borne in mind that there is a certain period of latency or "incubation" after their reception into the system, and that neither they nor almost any other known poison take effect with the same fearful celerity as the worst snake-venoms.

The accidents, fortunate and unfortunate, that have occurred within the practice of celebrated surgeons about whose skill there can be no two opinions, would fill a volume.

Dupuytren plunged a knife into a man's brain, and relieved him of an abscess in that situation, snatching him from the jaws of death; yet he killed a patient whose shoulder-joint he had set, by lancing an aneurism in mistake for a simple gathering. And for every such accident which has happened, probably a hundred might be found, were the truth known, that have been prevented only by what we are accustomed profanely to term "sheer luck" or "chance." I was once clinical pupil of a great London surgeon, one who even then was quoted universally as the greatest authority on the disease of which the case I am going to relate was an instance, and whose public appointments had long testified to the general recognition of his talents. In one ward of the hospital he had a patient who, he told us, was suffering from an abscess in the region of the hip; carefully demonstrating this to us, as he was wont to do, and explaining how such a disorder was to be diagnosed from other things with which a want of due precaution might cause it to be confounded. He then ordered me to get ready his instruments and chloroform by the bedside, as he proposed to incise the swelling when he had finished his round of visits in the hospital, and proceeded on his way; but before he returned, the man suddenly and mysteriously died, without a movement or a groan. There was a *post-mortem* examination of course; and it was then found that what had been mistaken for an abscess was in reality an aneurism, which had burst of itself internally, and caused instant death by loss of blood. An aneurism is a localized dilatation of an artery, which goes on increasing in size quite out of proportion to the blood-vessel itself, so that the sac may be as big as an orange—as it was in this case—or even larger, upon an artery no bigger than a goose-quill. The chief danger in such a tumor lies in the possibility of its bursting at any time, and to lance it would, of course, be almost necessarily immediately fatal. "Gentlemen," said our Professor, as the mystery was revealed, and the terrible position from which he had so narrowly escaped became apparent, "the French have a proverb that there is a special providence for drunkards and children. *I* say there is a special providence for surgeons!"

Nature is a wonderful surgeon; she commences a conservative process of repair directly after an injury. "Never too late to mend," is her motto. An old man of the enormous age of one hundred and two, came under my notice with a broken hip—that commonest of fractures among elderly people, whose bones are dry and brittle, often caused by accidents so slight as tripping the foot in a loose fold of carpet. No active treatment could be adopted; mechanical appliances would have caused mortification of the skin in a subject enfeebled by senile decay; so he was placed on a water-bed and kept wholly at rest. He lay there for twelve months, suffering but little pain, and then peacefully passed away, having ended his long life in comparative comfort. After death it was found that the fracture had actually healed, though naturally in a false position.

A disagreeable little *contre-temps* happens sometimes to young practitioners who are called upon for the first time to set a dislocated jaw. It rarely happens twice to the same operator. When the jaw is "put out," the hands, to effect its reduction, must grasp it over the teeth as far back as possible, so as to exert force in the necessary direction on the angle. It is often no easy matter; but when it *does* slip in, it goes back so suddenly that the mouth shuts to with a snap like a rat-trap; and the young surgeon draws an inference that for the future it will be better to shield his fingers with cork or india-rubber in dealing with cases of this kind.

It is well-known fact that people whose limbs have been amputated tell you that they can feel their fingers and toes for a long time afterwards—for years, sometimes—and will even describe pain and definite sensations as affecting certain joints of individual digits. This is readily understood when we remember that the brain is the only part of the body that *feels*, all sensations and impulses being conveyed to it from different parts by nerve-fibres. Feelings of pain, heat, cold, touch and the functions of the special senses are telegraphed to it; and when the connecting nerve is divided, it may be some time before it learns to localize truly the seat of the sensation it appreciates. When we knock our "funny-bones," we experience a thrill in the little fingers and inner border of the hand; the fact being that we have stimulated the bundle of telegraph wires—known as the ulnar nerve—which transmit sensations from that finger and part of the next, in the middle of its course, as it winds round the joint of the elbow.

Some years ago, a nurse in one of our Metropolitan hospitals, mistaking one bottle for another in the dim dawn of a foggy morning, gave a poor woman a teacupful of concentrated carbolic acid, instead of black draught. The unfortunate patient drank half of it, and might have taken it all before discovering the mistake, had she not paused for breath. She died in great agony in a few minutes. Medical men were of course on the spot; but nothing could be done. There is no antidote to carbolic acid; and the mouth, throat, and—as we afterwards found—the stomach were so burnt that it was impossible to use the stomach-pump; they were in fact charred white, like a stick. It appears extraordinary that any one should drink such a quantity of a fluid so intensely corrosive as this acid without finding the mistake directly it touched the lips; but medicines, never agreeable, are usually swallowed as hastily as possible, and the patient does not stop to analyze any specially unpleasant sensations, when he knows that some such are inevitable.

A curious parallel to this case was brought before me at sea, where a quartermaster went into cabin of an officer on watch in the middle of the night, and seizing what he took to be a bottle of brandy, drank about six ounces of the contents. It was pure carbolic acid, and the man fell dead before he could summon assistance; but here, too, we may account for the large amount swallowod before the character of the liquid was recognized. He was consciously in the commission of a theft, and being, moreover, in danger of detection every moment, no doubt hurried to secure the brandy as rapidly as he could, the expected fluid being also of a burning nature to the palate and throat. In this last case, the carbolic acid, though not in its own characteristic bottle, was labelled "Poison," and was kept in the officer's locker. The quartermaster had no doubt caught sight of the bottle there, and imagined it was stowed away for concealment. About a tablespoonful of this excellent disinfectant in the morning's bath is a great luxury in the tropics, not only allaying the maddening irritation of existent "prickly-heat" and insect bites, but acting as a preventive to other eruptions, and offering a discouragement to mosquitoes and other pests of these regions.

GOOD-BYE.

BY MAGGIE ROBERTSON.

SOFT falls the moonlight's silvery rays,
Glistening the crest of the wavelets dancing;
Fair is the maid by the shore who strays,
Gladness and hope from her blue eyes glancing.
Now she is nearing the trysting tree,
Soon her true lover she's fondly greeting.
Little she thinks, as the moments flee,
This is to be their farewell meeting.
Sad would the heart be; oh, bitter the sigh!
Could we know when we're bidding a last good-bye.

No longer the moonbeams gild the tide;
Athwart the sky is the lightning gleaming;
The youth has sailed from his promised bride;
Safe in her home she is sweetly dreaming.
No dread forebodings disturb her sleep;
Peaceful she rests on her snowy pillow;
Her love the while where the surges sweep,
Lies cold and still 'neath the foaming billow.
Sad would the heart be; oh, bitter the sigh!
Could we know when we're bidding a last good-bye.

All through our lives we are dropping friends,
Bidding good-bye without thought of grieving,
And dark the shadow each parting lends
To the web of life we are deftly weaving.
In that land of light where no shadows rest,
Life's web complete, and our labors ended,
We shall find our lives had not been blest
Had the shadow ne'er with the sunshine blended.
Ah, grieve not, dear friend, heave no bitter sigh;
To the faithful and true there is no good-bye.

A BACKWOODS WEDDING.

BY SUSAN HARTLEY.

THE Widow Appleby was very tired; she was always very tired, in fact, but this morning she had been hard at work since sunrise, spinning rolls for Mrs. Piper, who lived over at the "Road," and was, as she said, "All out o' knittin' work to ketch up when the men folks was a takin' their meals."

This afternoon Mrs. Piper was to have a sewing-bee at her house. Sewing-bees are still in vogue in this region; for sewing machines are scarce, and as a good supper with tea is generally served on such occasions, invitations to attend are eagerly accepted.

Mrs. Appleby had borrowed a pink cambric sacque of one neighbor, and a white petticoat of another; but the sacque was faded, and did not meet with her approbation, and the petticoat was sadly frayed around the bottom.

"Dear me," she said to herself, "I do wish I had a neighbor who had anything decent to wear. You can't borrow a decent thing in this miserable place, and if Mrs. Rich Mann had anything decent she would not lend it. I haven't seen the folks I used to know for so long, I did hope I could look sort of respectable to-day," she continued, regarding herself ruefully in the mirror, which was a part of the kitchen clock. "Everybody will say, 'Why, Syreny Appleby, how you have altered!' 'n' I do look full forty years old, I'm so tired out, 'n' these shabby old clothes set off my haggard face to the best possible advantage. I wonder what Reuben Waters would say if he could see me now."

Tears gathered in her childish blue eyes, and, forgetting to complete her toilet, she fell into a dreary revery. She had been very pretty in her girlhood, the belle of Contiscook County in fact. Her father, although no more richly endowed with worldly goods than many of his neighbors, sent her to an academy "down river," for a whole year, "To git some book knowledge," he said; for which act he was repaid, these neighbors declared, in Syreny's being spoiled for anything useful, but they all agreed that she was a "picter" when she came home with her fine new clothes on. Reuben Waters, the son of the largest lumber dealer in the county, fell in love with her, and they were engaged to be married. But while Reuben was absent in a neigboring town, engaged in the capacity of overseer in one of his father's mills, there came a report that he was paying a good deal of attention to the daughter of his father's partner. Being naturally of a jealous disposition, Syreny was quite ready to believe the report, and was nearly rendered insane thereby. John Appleby, who was the best dancer at the rustic gatherings, had long been jealous of Reuben's position as the accepted lover of Syreny, and took advantage of this state of affairs,—indeed, he was the inventor of the story of Reuben's flirtations, it was proved afterward,—and made haste to declare his affection for her, and Syreny, without waiting to realize what step she was taking, married him at once.

He was what they call, in Contiscook, a loafer. He lounged about the lumbering camps and the mills, but did nothing, with the exception of a day's work on the river now and then. He drank and gambled away all Syreny's little property left her by her father, who died soon after her marriage, and at the end of six years died from the effects of dissipation, leaving her and her little girl utterly destitute. The miserable log hut where they lived was a poor shelter in winter. The snow drifted in through the clinks between the logs. The wind blew out the candle, and the pittance which Syreny was able to earn, by spinning, and knitting socks and mittens for the stores "down river," hardly kept them from starving. Then her child sickened and died, and she was left alone in the world. She lost all ambition. Her health had been delicate from birth, and now she was always ailing. She went with uncombed locks and ragged elbows. She shunned the people whom she used to know in her girlhood. Her pretty face grew sharp and peaked. She lost her delicate pink bloom. Her tall, willowy figure grew thin and stooping. She was called "Dretful shiftless and bigoted," by her buxom, hard-working neighbors. But today she felt strangely impelled to go to the sewing-bee, and brave their curious eyes and plain remarks, for the people of the

Contiscook are frank to the last degree. Once her heart misgave her, and she decided not to go after all, but looking out of the window something seemed to beckon her from the woods, from the pastures, from the sky, and without more delay, she put on her bonnet and started on her way.

It was a bright June day. Even the stillness seemed to shine. The wild vines which trailed along the stump fences were a perfect glory of flowers. Daisies and buttercups danced together in sunny hollows, between clumps of sweet fern and bayberry. Her slow footsteps clipped off the heads of these blossoms, making a sound which reminded her painfully of old days. She was in an impressible mood to-day. At other times she would not have heeded it at all, nor that the bird in the velvet shadows of the pine woods was singing a song that she and Reuben Waters used to listen to in the long, idle mornings of midsummer, when he used to walk over from the river to her father's house. The greater part of her way led through the woods. She rested a while on the "deacon seat" of a deserted lumbering camp, which was cool with breeze and shadow. Starry moosewood blossoms pushed their heads between the clinks in the logs; stray leaves from the *National Songster*, a book much prized by the lumbermen, were blowing about the floor. Heavy pine branches drooped about the doorway, and on the roof sat a huge, sleepy owl with his head muffled in his dappled feathers. Beyond the camp the woods were less dense. Sunbeams struggled in through breezy little spaces, and there were heartsome glimpses of blue sky overhead. Then there was a cheery opening with the glimmer of silver birches and a sheet of bright blue water, upon which stood the picturesque ruins of an old mill, half in light and half in shadow. A great bank of wild azaleas, on the other side of the stream, blushed redly through its blackened arches. Syreny stood upon the rustic bridge which spanned the water, and looked sadly around her.

"I wonder if Reuben Waters has forgot all about the days when we used to come 'n' stand here?" she said aloud, heaving a deep sigh.

"No, he hasn't, 'n' he never will, Syreny," exclaimed a cheery voice from behind.

And giving a startled glance over her shoulder, she beheld the object of her thoughts.

"O Reuben, can it be you? I never expected to see you again," she said, growing white as the moosewood flowers in her hand.

"I came up on purpose to find you out, Syreny. I—I know you didn't treat me well, you"——

"Don't, Reuben! I know I did wrong, but haven't I suffered for it? I didn't realize what I was doing. The stories I heard about you 'n' Mercy Ann Quimby worked me up so."

"Well, Syreny, we won't say anything more about that. I was on my way to your house this minute, to say let bygones be bygones. I've been trying these three or four years to marry Mercy Ann Quimby out o' spite, but couldn't make up my mind to it after all. I can't like anybody but you somehow."

"O Reuben, how can you. I've changed so dreadfully. I've grown so old and homely. You used to say I was pretty as a wild rose."

"And you're pretty now, Syreny,—pretty as a birch-tree. So tall 'n' slender, with a gleamy look in your face, and in your eyes, 'n' soft, bright hair. A woman can't always look like a rose, 'n' I'm glad, for my own sake, that you ain't quite so pink and velvety as you used to be. I should be afraid you wouldn't have anything to say to a grizzly like me, in that case. Then it looks as if one hadn't any feeling not to grow old any, 'n' I shouldn't believe that you'd been a caring about me all this time."

She lifted her face full of surprised joy to his own, and the old rich bloom suddenly dawned in her cheek, something of the old light beamed in her eyes.

"I declare, Syreny, you haven't changed so much after all. You are as pretty as a rose still. My eyesight must have been dimmed by the sunshine. I have been so long in the shadow of the woods. But I haven't time to shillyshally; I must go back down river to-morrow, and I want to take you with me, Syreny. What do you say to having a wedding this afternoon? As good luck would have it, Elder Grant came up to the 'Road' with me last night, and is going to be at Mrs. Piper's sewing-bee this afternoon. Mrs. Piper is a relative of mine, you know, and would be pleased enough to have me married at her house."

"Dear me, Reuben, are you in earnest?" almost gasped Syreny.

"Of course I am in earnest. What's the use in waiting? I've waited for you long enough already."

"But it's too sudden altogether. It seems kinder like what pa used to call getting ahead of Providence, 'n' then how could I be married in these shabby old clothes? There wouldn't be any sacredness to a wedding under such circumstances."

"Now I thought you were dressed up splendid. You couldn't look prettier in anything than you do in this pale sort o' rose color, and the white bow at your throat looks as bird-like as can be. I'm perfectly satisfied with your looks myself, and why should we care what other folks think?"

Syreny finally yielded to his wishes, though with many tremulous misgivings as to what the "Road" people would say and think of the proceeding. But if Reuben must leave the place to-morrow, to return at some indefinite, far-away period, she felt that she could not be left behind under any circumstances.

"Tim White is here at the mills, and I can get the license in five minutes, you see. I hinted to the elder yesterday that I might need his services to-day, and he'll be all ready and waiting for us," said Reuben, eagerly. "As for clothes, Syreny, you can have twenty new dresses as soon as we get home if you like."

The sewing-bee was already in progress when they reached Mrs. Piper's house,—a large, square, unpainted building, desolately new and bare. A bed of mustard blossoms, yellow as gold, shone in the dooryard, and emitted a strange pungent fragrance. A brood of half-grown chickens were recklessly scratching in a clump of widow's-tears. A gorgeous green-and-bronze rooster, seemingly seized with a presentiment that something extraordinary was going to happen, mounted the wood-pile and crowed lustily.

"Lordy man! if here ain't Syreny Appleby 'n' Reuben Waters a comin' up to the door together," ejaculated Mrs. Sam Tosier, who was sitting in the window. "Who'd 'a' thought it!"

Thereupon an expectant hush fell upon the assembly. Needles were held suspended in mid-air. All work was dropped, and all eyes were directed toward the door.

Syreny with downcast eyes and throbbing heart appeared upon the scene, striving to hide herself in Reuben's shadow as nearly as possible. The greetings were loud and demonstrative; for Contiscook manners are not of a subdued fashion, and Reuben was regarded as a man of distinction, for there was a report that he made a great deal of money "down river," and had become the owner of the mills where he had been employed as overseer; and then his father was a rich man also.

Reuben requested to see Mrs. Piper a few moments in private, and the two left the room together, leaving poor Syreny to brave the eyes and tongues of the sewing-bee alone.

"Well, now you are lucky, ha'n't you, Syreny Appleby? I wouldn't ha' bleeved Reuben Waters would ever ha' courted you agin, specially now you're got along in years, 'n' hev growed so kind er poor 'n' peaked in the face. But folks hez queer notions, 'n' the Waterses wus allers a passil uv odd sticks," said Mrs. Sam Tosier, first removing the dozen pins or so which she always carried in her mouth, in order to speak more distinctly.

"I dun kneow ez 'tis eny sign he's a courtin' her, coz they come here long with each other," remarked Miss Claribel Piper, the red-cheeked beauty of the neighborhood, tossing her head scornfully.

"Well, I'm most sartain it means a weddin'," laughed Mrs. Clewly, a jolly-looking old woman, whose cap was tied beneath her rosy chin. "'N', ez fur me, I'm awful glad. Syreny hez hed an awful passil o' trouble tew live through sence she married John. 'Tain't no wrong fur her tew be dretful resigned to his death, ez fur 's I kneow, fur Reuben 's a stiddy, likely man, 'n' 'll make a desperate good husband."

Syreny, looking the picture of confusion, said neither yea nor nay. Reuben's return afforded her some relief, but it was only temporary; for, after giving her one brief glance of encouragement and sympathy, he announced that he should be obliged to be absent for a short time, and taking his hat disappeared out of doors and down the road.

Mrs. Piper came and tapped her playfully on the shoulder.

"I may as well tell the folks all about it neow, Syreny, for they're dyin' to know, 'n' the elder'll come purty soon, 'n' let the cat eout o' the bag enyhow."

"O Lordy! is the weddin' a goin' tew be this afternoon?" exclaimed Mrs. Tosier. "It's awful sudden, no mistake. I never

dreampt o' that. I shouldn't 'a' said haow Syreny was dressed up enough."

Mrs. Piper, who was a good-natured woman, explained the circumstances of the case as Reuben had explained them to her.

"He said he must go home to-morrow, whether or no, 'n' couldn't wait for Syreny tew make a dress, 'n' lor'! what difference duz it make after all? That pink sacque is dretful becomin' tew her."

"Trew, it don't make no difference ez long ez the heart is in the right place," said Mrs. Clewly; "but it must be kinder onhandy to git married so unbeknownst. I- s'pose you ha'n't made no rugs or nothin', child?"

Syreny droopingly confessed she had not.

"Marriage is a dreadful solemn thing, dressed in white or no," remarked Mrs. Soper, a melancholy looking woman, with a wart on her nose, which somehow seemed a part of her melancholy. "Husban's is desp'rate oncertain at the best, 'n' housekeepin' 'n' house-work is wearin' enuff to kill a woman stun dead. I allers wisht I'd stuck to the tailoress trade, instid o' gittin' married. There's nothin' like a man to bring dirt intew a house. Folks that git married has got tew trust in the Lord, 'n' keep plenty o' soft soap in the house."

"O Lor'! yeou air tew pisen neat altogether, Mrs. Soper," said Lorry Smith, a girl with saucy black eyes, and very tightly curled ringlets. "Ez fur me, I bleeve in gittin' married. I only wisht Reuben Waters hed asked me to keep house fur him. Wouldn't I ha' jumped at the chance!"

The entrance of Elder Grant and his buxom wife created a momentary diversion.

"Lor'! did you travel clean way over from the other settlement, Sister Grant?" said Mrs. Piper, as she assisted that lady to remove her bonnet.

"No, we didn't travel all the way; we rid as fur as Brother White's, 'n' traveled from there over."

"Well, this is an interestin' occasion," remarked the elder, shaking Syreny's hand with extra cordiality. "You don't alwez hev a weddin' 'n' a sewin'-bee together, Sister Piper."

"A weddin' 'n' a death otter be a solumn warnin' to all on us," said Mrs. Soper, wishing to be pious in the presence of the elder, and warnings she considered pious.

Something like a smile flickered in the round blue eyes of the elder, though he drew his mouth into a dismal pucker of assent. Blessed, or rather afflicted in this case, with a jovial nature, and feeling it his duty as a preacher of the gospel to be severe and solemn, the elder's face was always strangely contradictory in its expression.

"As soon as the groom comes in, we will perceed with the ceremony, fer me 'n' Mrs. Grant is expected to spend the night over to Brother Trafton's, 'n' it's a good eight mile to Yaller Brook. Sister Piper has promised us an early tea so's we can git a good start," he said, looking around on the highly edified company.

Syreny, accompanied by Lorry Smith, adjourned to the best bedroom to add a few finishing touches to her toilet. The elder pulled a Moody and Sankey book from his pocket, and studied it gravely. It was evident that the assembled ladies were too much excited to sew.

"If I hed known about the weddin' in time, I'd ha' put more plums inter my cake, 'n' more sweetnin' inter my pies," said Mrs. Piper regretfully; "but they'll hev to do as 'tis."

The thrilling mention of plum cake was not without its effect upon the company. Each face brightened with a more intense delight, and more than one pair of expectant eyes was lifted to the clock.

"How such kind o' slim 'n' shiftless women as Syreny git took care uv! I declare, I never see the beat," remarked Mrs. Peter White, a lady who wore two strings of gold beads.

"'Tis so, they do. But 'ta'n't all of 'em that's ez lucky as Syreny," came from several ladies at once. "Reuben owns a good deal of property. She will be able to drink store tea every day, 'n' hev no end o' nice beddin' 'n' good clo'se."

"Poverty is a dretful vice, and Syreny's bin through her share of it," sighed Mrs. Soper. "Current-leaf tea is desp'rate tejus drinkin', 'n' sage is tew mild and lowerin' to the spirits. I hope her good forchin won't set her up 'n' make her forgit the Lord that made her."

Syreny and Reuben now entered the room arm in arm, and placed themselves gravely before the elder, who rose from his chair.

"She does look real well, after all," went from group to group in a loud whisper, "'n' as for Reuben, he's a splendid lookin' man, dressed up slick as a minister, tew."

Syreny did look well. Her hair, which was "young and yellow," was wound round

her shapely head in a coronet of braids. At her throat she wore an exquisite tea-rose, which Mrs. Piper had cut from one of her cherished "house plants." There was a pretty, girlish flush on her thin cheek, and a bright, happy light in her somewhat faded blue eyes. Reuben, who was the picture of honest manliness, looked down upon her proudly and protectingly.

"We will commence these solemn and interestin' exercises by singin' the followin' hymn."

And the elder commenced to read "Pull for the Shore," quaintly inserting a groan between each stirring sentence. But the melodies of Moody and Sankey are comparatively new in this region, and after several unsuccessful attempts at harmony, the sisters broke down altogether.

"Well," said he, "if we can't sing this, we can all sing Old Hundred. That's alwez refreshin' to the sperit, ef 'tis old-fashioned."

And Old Hundred was sung with power and feeling. The elder possessed a deep, mellow voice, and it rang out lustily, supporting and mingling harmoniously with the shrill soprano of the sisters.

Syreny was moved to tears as she listened. She thought she should hear that blessed sound all her life long. Then there was an interval of silence, for the elder, as all the Contiscook people declared, "Wuz as slow as the picter of Time on the almanac." The bees buzzed in the scarlet balsams on the window seat. The dreamy noise of the river drifted in at the window. The robins were singing in the woods. The sun, which had been shining on Syreny's yellow head, slipped into a clond. Then, clearing his throat, he performed the ordinary brief ceremony used on such occasions. Reuben and Syreny joined their hands, and were pronounced man and wife. Then he prayed long and fervently—a beautiful prayer, the sisters agreed afterward; and after giving the wedded pair a few words of admonition and exhortation, rubbed his forehead, and resumed his seat.

But it was some time before the happy couple were through with hand-shaking and receiving advice and good wishes. Nearly all the advice was addressed to poor Syreny, however. Reuben's brow darkened and his face flushed angrily, when Mrs. Tosier appeared with her morsel of this precious commoditory.

"Syreny," said she, "I don't spose you will jest kneow haow ter behave when you cum ter hev things like other folks agin, but don't be like Mrs. Phebe Baker's Lizy, 'n' forget all about your poor days, 'n' the folks that befriended you then. You've spun for me considerable, 'n' I've allers paid you well for it. Mrs. Piper's been like a mother ter you tew."

"I dew hope it won't shower," said Mrs. Clewly. "A shower on a weddin' day is a sure sign o' tears; 'n', Syreny, be dretful keerful to-night 'n' not look at the new moon over your left shoulder."

"'N' be sure 'n' go out the same door that you come in at, when you go home. Menny a bride hez brought herself dretful bad luck by a-goin' out at a different one," said Mrs. Peter White, with wise solemnity.

The supper-table was spread with rustic elegance, and was groaning with plenty. Mrs. Piper urged everyone to make his or her tea real sweet, with true, country hospitality. The plates of the bride and bridegroom were so laden through the attentions of their friends that they were made embarrassed and uncomfortable. The ladies of the sewing-bee waxed merry under the genial influence of the store tea, their eyes sparkled with delight. They held their knives between their thumb and first finger, with the remaining fingers uplifted, and spread wide apart in accordance to the rules of aboriginal gentility. They complimented Mrs. Piper on her cooking; they flattered each other; they flattered the elder. Oh, that Time could have gone to sleep on the clock face then and there!

"Lordy man! I never see the beat! Didn't the elder make it well a marryin' that couple? Reuben gin him a five-dollar bill; I see it with my own eyes, or I wouldn't ha' bleeved it!" exclaimed Mrs. Tosier, after supper, when the happy couple had started on their homeward way across the sunset fields.

"You don't say so! Wal, if 'twa'n't a goin' to the gospil, I should call it sinful extravagance, tew throw away such a passil o' money that way. Why, Squire Webster, down to the Falls, didn't pay nothin' but a little tea 'n' sweetnin' out of his store when he married Sally Tilden, 'n' he's fust cousin to a settled minister, 'n' drives a top kerridge," said Mrs. Soper, who was on the verge of swallowing two pins in her excitement.

IDEAS ABOUT OLD MAIDS.

BY MISS MARY J. FIELD.

I BEG leave to observe that I am not an old maid, and therefore do not write from prejudiced views or *esprit de corps*. But I have lived long enough to remember many a possible old maid when in the bloom of her "sweet seventeen," and to have noticed the subtle transformations effected by the finger of Time. Were it not that with a certain order of minds truth is readily sacrificed for the sake of a joke, I should find it difficult to imagine how the vulgar idea of an old maid became established as the artistic, theatrical, and even literary type. If we take up an illustrated book or newspaper, especially where the designs are intended to be humorous, and a spinster of a certain age has to be depicted, we see her as a matter of course gaunt and hideous, sour-looking and ill-dressed, and almost certainly with "spectacles on nose." In fiction and the drama, if poor, she is described as envious and spiteful; if rich, as the easy prey of designing flatterers,—unloved except by feline favorites, the laughing-stock of the young, and neglected by the entire world.

But if we look into familes, into the real human life which is throbbing all around us, it is a far different picture which presents itself. The old maid is not unfrequently one of the noblest figures in the family group. She is generally a personage who makes sacrifices for others; if rich, she is often a Lady Bountiful in even a better sense than that commonly understood by the term; and if poor and what is called dependent, she is pretty sure to be the indefatigable good angel of the family. We have known some estimable maiden ladies of this type, their age crowning them with glory.

How very frequently is the old maid the ever-tender nurse in sickness, the careful housekeeper if need be, the alternate instructress and playmate of the children, the wise counsellor of the young, and the trusted *confidante* of the old. There is generally a very sweet humility about the genuine old maid; and by genuine I mean one who has accepted her position as definite and absolute. She knows herself to be in a certain sense of less account than wives and mothers; and if thoughtless and unsympathetic people occasionally make her feel that they are of the same opinion, she bows to their judgement. She does not even resent the half-contemptuous pity which is sometimes made apparent by those who take it for granted that she laments her destiny, and would have had it otherwise if she could. Here and there probably there may be a case where such pity is deserved, but with a large proportion of single women it is far different.

If we knew the heart-histories of many old maids we should find them characterized by the purest pathos and a life's most elevating discipline. Often does a woman remain single because she is faithful to an ideal! Perhaps some happy dream of girlhood was broken by death or estrangement,—perhaps she never met the man who fully realized her aspirations, and whom in perfect featly she could feel herself able to love, honor, and obey. Whatever men may think on the subject, that last word "obey" has a grave meaning to thoughtful women, who, conscious of a "soul of their own," are a little terrified at all obedience may involve. Other women there are of gentle and more yielding natures who have formed an ideal which is never reached, though this class only desire to find the idol worthy of their adoration and obedience. At any rate the woman who remains single rather than make a "half-hearted" marriage is worthy of all honor.

But there is worse than half-heartedness to apprehend. The newspapers almost daily report cases of neglect and even savage cruelty of husbands toward their wives. These sorrowful cases are not confined to the humbler sections of society. Judicial inquiry shows that they occur in what are termed the higher and respectable circles. Can we wonder, then, that women of a delicate turn of mind, and who are not positively dependent on matrimony for subsistence, are apt to shrink from incurring a risk, and ultimately reject a married life should circumstance offer? If they be wrong in their determination, let men and the law together bear the discredit.

Let us also consider the number of "single women of a certain age" who are filling positions of high responsibility and important trust. Look at the multitude of schoolmistresses and teachers of various denominations who are in many cases the mainstay of venerable parents, and not unfrequently of orphaned nephews and nieces. Authors and artists also of note have been and are of the sisterhood; and coming lower down in the social scale, how commonly is the most valued domestic servant unmarried. How pleasing to witness the cases of noble integrity and self-sacrifice in female domestics, who, from attachment to their old mistresses, prefer to remain celibates for life. As faithful housekeepers, nurses, assistants in various capacities, they pass not only a blameless but an honorable existence. Several instances of this kind have fallen within our knowledge; and it is gratifying to see, by obituaries, how the loss of these aged and faithful ministers to domestic comfort is truly mourned by their friendly employers.

In these days it is an acknowledged fact that there are far more women than men in the country; also there has arisen within the last thirty or forty years a great change in public opinion with regard to the dependence and independence of women, and both these circumstances ought to sweep away—as one wipes writing from a slate—the false and malignant type of the old maid. A generation back, in what may be called the upper-middle class, it was taken as a matter of course that the women of a family were to be supported by the men. When a daughter was portionless or nearly so, a dying father would leave her as a legacy to his sons, with full persuasion that she would be duly cared for; and the families of professional men were reduced from comfort to penury by the death of the bread-winner just as often then as they are now. But it was only in cases where there was exceptional energy of character that the "young lady" or the "single woman of a certain age" thought herself other than hardly used, if not slightly disgraced, if she had to exert herself for a maintenance.

Happily public opinion on such matters is now greatly improved. All right-minded people applaud single women who make honorable careers for themselves; who "find their work, and do it." And there is plenty of woman's work to be found waiting to be done,—work that is essentially feminine and suited to her powers. We are not speaking now of wives and mothers whose first duties are in the home sphere, but of single women who are too conscious of their capacities to sit with folded hands, and be as the lilies that "toil not, neither do they spin." Nowadays rich women of energetic character are often among the busiest of mortals, and these women have the keenest sympathy with, and admiration for, their more forlorn sisters who toil perhaps primarily for independence, but who also love their work and execute it conscientiously. In fact, every such woman not only elevates herself, but by insensibly raising public opinion benefits her sex.

To despise an old maid was always a mean stupidity; and now it is really an absurdity. It would be indiscreet and invidious to mention the names of the living, but every thoughtful reader will recall the old maids who are prominently before the world as wise benefactors and teachers, helpers of the weak, and pioneers of progress in many directions. If unmarried women, as some think, occasionally bring a degree of ridicule on their sex by a fussy forwardness to assume the political position of men, such are merely exceptional cases; and it may be questioned whether the blame for these eccentricities is not frequently more due to the crotchets of politicians trying to make capital than to any deliberate feminine intention. All sensible women know how to make themselves respected and useful without trenching on duties that would only bring them embarrassment.

Literature in the present and the past owes much to the unmarried ladies. Of the dead, we may only mention Hannah More and Joanna Baillie, Maria Edgeworth and Mary Russell Mitford, as old maids the world delighted to honor, and whose happy influence has extended far beyond their own generation.

DESERTED TO THE ENEMY: OR, THE ADVENTURES OF A NEW HAMPSHIRE SCOUT.

BY M. QUAD.

"HALLOO! just the chap I was looking for. You will report to General B—— right away. He's got work for you across the river."

It was one night in October, 1863, when the army of the Potomac was scattered along the bank of the Rapidan, planning and scheming to give the rebellion another blow like Gettysburg before the eye of winter should demand permanent quarters. We had been idle for many days, as an army. I was a scout, and from a bit of work done a few months before, when attached to a New Hampshire regiment, I had got the title of "The New Hampshire Scout." For several months past I had been employed as a "professional," taking anything which came along, but the past week had been an idle week for me; and so, when Captain Bangs halted me on that chilly, autumn night, his message gave me a feeling of relief and satisfaction. In ten minutes I had my overcoat pockets full of provisions, my revolver packed away, and was standing before the tent occupied by General B——. He was in close communication with headquarters, had the full confidence of the general commanding, and all the scouts in the army of the Potomac took their orders and instructions directly from him.

The sentinel passed me in after a moment's hesitation, and General B—— swept aside a mass of papers and notes, motioned me to a camp-stool, and then blurted out:—

"Ready to go over the Rapidan in twenty minutes?"

"Yes, or five," I replied.

"Good," said he; and after a keen glance at my face, he went on, "We want news from over the river—not only news, but all the particulars which every scout can secure. They are up to some devilish scheme over there, and we must know what it is. Scouts have crossed above and below, and I have saved this place for you. You will cross the river, penetrate the enemy's lines as far as you can—five or ten miles—notice whether he has erected earthworks, what they are, what troops are arriving, if any are leaving, find out where Lee is—in fact, within the next ten days we must have a clear statement of everything that is going on in our front."

"Must" was a great word with many generals. He had given me orders and instructions which could hardly be followed if I was allowed to walk through the Confederate army without risk or molestation; and he had not ceased speaking before I was wondering where I could secure a pair of wings and a magic lamp.

"Here are a hundred dollars in gold," continued the general, rising up and handing down a small bag. "Start right away; be prudent and watchful, and report within thirty hours. Good-night."

In another moment I was standing out in the keen air, and in a quarter of an hour was at the river, Captain Bangs having loaned me his horse, and sent an orderly along to bring it back. At this point of our line the Confederates held one bank of the river and the Union pickets the other. Each picket line was well back from the bank, to be out of accurate musket range. In many places the river was wide and deep, and in other places so narrow and shallow that it was no more than a babbling brook. I learned from the advance posts that at night both lines were advanced nearer the river, and that an extra force was put to guard every place where the stream could be forded. I had never crossed the Rapidan at this point before, and the information received from the outposts was timely and valuable.

Before leaving the last post, which had been advanced down the road to within five rods of the river, I asked the pickets to do me a favor, and they readily complied. It was simply to discharge five or six muskets in quick succession. You see I had my plan already laid, and was calculating on this assistance to aid me in getting into the Confederate lines. The reports of the muskets created an alarm from the other bank, but in a few minutes everything was quiet again, and I was ready to go forward. Walking swiftly and cautiously down the road, I struck the river at a point where the water would not be more than waist deep at any

part of the passage, and stepped quietly into the stream. I proposed to enter the Confederate lines secretly and as a scout, if possible, and if not, to palm myself off as a deserter, trusting in either event to acquire the desired information and make a safe escape with it.

Slowly and cautiously, having enough to do to avoid snags and rocks, and to keep my foothold against the current, I worked my way along, and in a few minutes was standing upon the opposite bank. I had not seen or heard the Confederate pickets thus far, and reasoned that I should not, as I had made calculations to land several rods below the spot pointed out to me from the Union side as the station of the nearest Confederate outpost. But a scout was never certain of anything except what he saw with his own eyes, and directly a little exhibition took place which came near ending my adventurous days. Ordinarily I wore boots, but two days before this adventure had drawn a pair of soft shoes from the quartermaster. In landing, I had walked through a bed of fine gravel, filling my shoes, and my first thought after reaching the bank was to remove the nuisance. Just as I stooped over, bang! bang! went half a dozen muskets, and the screaming ounce-balls brought my hair up on end.

"Here they are! give them the bayonet!" shouted two or three men, charging down upon me in the darkness.

I shouted for quarter and threw up my arms; but if I had not leaped this way and that, and avoided their bayonets, the excited soldiers would have finished me before recovering from their scare. However, they soon saw that I was alone, instead of with the vanguard of the Union army, and they lowered their muskets and came closer to me.

"This is a pretty way to welcome a recruit to the ranks of the Confederate army, isn't it?" I shouted, as I saw that I must depend solely on the character of a deserter.

"Who are you? are you a deserter from over there?" inquired a sergeant, stepping forward.

"I am, sir," I replied; "but if you greet a fellow in this way, you won't get many more to come."

The men then gathered around me, wanted to know the name of my regiment, my own name, my reasons for deserting, and I was finally passed back to the reserve post. I gave such answers as I deemed best to every inquiry, and was careful to "pile it on" to Uncle Sam in a way to suit the bitterest Johnny. On arriving at the reserve, a lieutenant took me in hand, and for half an hour plied me with questions, and cross-examined me so sharply that I more than once began to believe that he took me for a spy.

"You say that you are a deserter," said he, at length, "but how do I know it? What made you sneak across the river so much like a spy? and why didn't your folks shoot at you?"

I insisted that several muskets had been discharged at me by the Union outposts—proving the assertion by some of the pickets—and that I had crossed the river without noise in order that I might not be heard and made a target for the Union muskets. The lieutenant did not seem quite satisfied yet, and sent me under guard to the main lines, a mile or so back from the river. He couldn't have done me a better turn; I was only afraid that he would insist on my remaining for a day or two at the reserve post. Reaching the lines, I was taken to the quarters of the provost-marshal. That functionary was absent, and I was ordered to sit down and wait for him, the soldiers occupying seats in the doorway to guard against any attempt to escape. My stool was at the far end of the tent, close to the canvas, and I had not been seated a moment before I was deeply interested in a conversation going on in the adjoining tent. All the headquarter tents were in a group, seeming to have been hastily put up, without reference to rank or red tape. I have never been quite sure, but I have many reasons to believe that Lee, Stuart, and other Confederate generals, occupied the adjoining tent, and that they were holding a council of war. I could hear every word that was spoken, and as soon as aware of the importance of the conversation, did my best, by looking around the tent and making occasional inquiries, to prevent my guards from seeing that I was interested.

"Now is the time," said one of the voices; "it is the only way to restore the confidence of the South. If we move swiftly by the flank, 20,000 men will be a day's march on the route to the Potomac before the Union forces strike a tent."

For a full hour similar conversation was indulged in, until I was positively certain that a great flank movement was contem-

plated by Lee—a flank movement with a view of seizing the national capital, as well as driving the Union army beyond the Potomac. Had I been one of the council, I could not have learned more, as I knew the towns and gaps mentioned, and had been over every foot of the route which the army in gray must take. There was only one matter lacking. While I was certain that a move was to be made, I could not catch the date fixed upon, it not being spoken aloud, if at all. However, I heard orders and instructions given and matters mentioned, which would have explained to the dullest private soldier that instant preparations were to be made for a grand march and expected battles.

Just as the council seemed on the point of breaking up, it suddenly occurred to me that the provost-marshal, for whom we waited, might be one of the members. If so, he must not suspect that I had heard a word. I rose up, walked to the other side, gave a yawn or two, and finally approached the door and sat down on the ground close to the soldiers. In two minutes after the officer appeared. He did not express surprise or distrust at my statements, merely taking down my fictitious name and regiment. He seemed very much occupied with other thoughts, frequently asking me the same questions two or three times over.

"Well, sir, what do you propose to do?" he at length inquired, having finished his writing.

There was one thing which I did not propose to do—take the oath of allegiance to the Southern Confederacy. In case I did and deserted, I would be shot if ever captured again, and the risk would put an end to my scouting. I therefore replied that I proposed to enter some Confederate regiment as a soldier, relating a long yarn about how I had been cruelly treated in the Union army, and expressing a desire to wipe out old scores with a Confederate musket. My statement was a flimsy one, after all, and I have no doubt that it would have been received in a different manner had not the officer had greater things to occupy his mind.

"Well," said he, speaking in an absent way, "you can look around for a day or two, and then make a choice of regiments. I guess you are all right, and I think you will like our service."

Thus speaking, the provost-marshal waved me out and began to spread a map before him. The two soldiers had heard the conversation, and when we left the tent they were anxious for me to join their regiment. I replied that I wanted a little time before making a choice, and offered them ten dollars to procure me a change of clothing, stating that I desired to step into a suit of gray as soon as possible. One of the men ran off among the tents, and was back in five minutes with a suit complete, except the overcoat. His regiment was the Tenth Virginia, and the cap bore the initials and the number. After I had passed him over a ten-dollar gold-piece, and the two had indulged in many exclamations of admiration, they informed me that I could pass the night in their tent. We proceeded directly to it, and found that the third man had been detailed for guard duty, thus leaving no one in charge. This was a bit of good fortune which I had not anticipated. After throwing out a few suggestions, the two soldiers departed for the picket line, and I was not five minutes getting into the suit of gray. Sitting down upon a log of wood before the rude fireplace, I planned as follows: I had secured valuable information, which should be carried to the Union army as soon as possible. I had thus far had everything my own way. As soon as possible—at least within twenty-four hours—I must make my escape across the Rapidan. I had only to exercise common prudence and discretion to be out of the camp before another midnight.

Feeling exultant and satisfied, I rummaged around until I found some eatables, put down a good lunch, and then rolled into a blanket before the fire and was soon sleeping like a Rip Van Winkle. Soon after daylight someone hauled the blanket off, and I opened my eyes to meet the wondering gaze of a tall "Johnny," who stood over me, musket in hand. As I sat up, he inquired who I was, and when I had informed him, and detailed a part of the previous night's adventure, he was satisfied, and reported himself as having just been relieved from guard duty. He at once prepared breakfast, and we got along famously together. I learned from him the names of the regiments and brigades in that locality, what division held the ford, something about the force of cavalry and artillery, and, in fact, pumped him clean dry, doing it with all the understanding that I was considering in what arm of the Confederate service I should enlist. The soldier was keen and intelligent, and that I bamboozled

him a little was not his fault. I have known instances where Confederate spies and scouts gleamed much more valuable information from Union colonels and generals—men supposed to be the personification of prudence.

After breakfast my companion, who gave me his name as Hugh Corbett, turned in for a sleep. He informed me that his companions of the picket line would not be in for three days, and that I was meanwhile entirely welcome to share the tent with him. After being satisfied that he was asleep, I took down his overcoat, put it on, and drew the cap over my head, buckled a belt around my body, and then boldly sallied out, determined on a series of observations. As far as I could see there were tents, wagons, cannon and soldiers, in every direction. Troops were coming in, troops tearing up and marching away, and I was in the midst of a crowd of soldiers moving about; some getting breakfast, some cleaning their horses and guns, and others gambling or writing letters. There was but one right way—to put a bold face on the matter, and let every one see that I felt at home. I had but little fear that any one would suspect me of being a Yankee scout, as I was now in full Confederate uniform, and therefore moved about without much care or the least anxiety.

Turning down the river, I commenced a tour of observation among the pieces of artillery parked here and there. Battery after battery was passed, and every now and then I came upon a half finished breastwork, or an ambush for heavy guns, that had been worked upon the day before, but were left to themselves now. This was another proof that Lee contemplated a change of position; there was no use finishing breastworks when they would not be needed. Not a single soldier suspected my identity. I moved about, asked questions in a cautious way, made mental notes of this thing and that, and it at last got to be noon. Feeling the need of something to eat, I was making my way back to Corbett's tent, intending to go in another direction after dinner, when I ran across the lieutenant who had received me at the ford when I deserted on the following evening, and who had been so suspicious that I was not all right. I turned my head the other way, commenced whistling, and hoped to get by him unknown. But he was not to be avoided. Despite my new disguise, he knew me in a moment.

"You, there—hold on, I say!"

I walked on very fast, dodging among the wagons, but he came after me on the run, and when he seized my shoulder, I saw that I must face him.

"What in —— are you doing in a Confederate uniform? and what in—are you prowling around camp for?"

While he was speaking I had made up my mind to "brass it out," and so coolly replied:—

"What is to prevent me from wearing a Confederate uniform, if I choose to?"

"But, curse you!" he replied, savagely, "you are no Confederate."

I replied that I recognized him as the officer who had received me on the previous night, and asked him if he did not recollect my request to enter the Confederate service, and also the fact that he had sent me under guard to the provost-marshal. This staggered him a little, but he was under the influence of drink, in a savage mood, and he came for me again.

"It don't make any difference. I believe you are a contemptible Yankee spy, prowling around here for information, and I am going to see about it."

He then informed me that he should place me under guard until my case could be investigated. This I objected to, demanding that he should at once take me before the provost-marshal, who could certify to my passing an examination the night before. He was not inclined to this course at first, but several officers, attracted to the spot by his loud tones, joined in with me; and so I was taken to the marshal's tent, the lieutenant boasting that he would have me hung for a spy. I had but little fear, as the provost-marshal had been so easy with me, but on arriving at his quarters, we found that he was absent, and was not expected to return for two days. An assistant was in charge, but he had never seen me before, and of course knew nothing of the case. He was a pompous little man, better fitted for a place behind some office desk, and the lieutenant had only to tell him that he suspected me to be a Yankee spy, when an examination was at once concluded on.

I was then put through a catechism which lasted for a full hour. During the latter part of it the liquor imbibed by the lieutenant so overcame him that he fell asleep, and the pompous little man declared that I seemed to be all right, and would be released

from custody by taking the oath of allegiance to the Confederate States, and enrolling myself among the defenders.

This I could not do, unless to save my life, as it would necessitate my leaving the Union service altogether, or of running a daily chance of capture and a rope. I therefore begged him to grant me a little more time, saying that I had an old friend in the Tenth whom I wished to consult. Had it not been for my evil shadow, the lieutenant, I would have been allowed to depart without further questioning. I had this liberty from the marshal, and was already walking away, when the lieutenant woke up, saw me departing, and instantly shouted for me to return. The marshal explained matters to him, but he was now thoroughly aroused, and fiercely shouted:—

"Marshal or no marshal, you go to the guard-house! You can't pull any of your cursed Yankee wool over my eyes, and you needn't try!"

All that could be said had no effect on him. He was determined that I should either take an oath of allegiance and join some regiment within an hour, or else be put under guard until the provost-marshal himself returned. Seeing that further argument might prejudice my case, I replied that he could do as he thought best, saying that I had no doubts as to the result when the proper officer returned.

Calling to the sentry at the door, the lieutenant wrote something on a slip of paper, had it signed by the consequential little man, and then gave me in charge. I was conducted to a tent about forty rods away, and found it to be a temporary guard-house for the confinement of several soldiers under punishment. The slip of paper was handed to the guard at the door, as we came up to him, but he could not read it. The guard in charge of me was better educated, and he read the order aloud for the benefit of all three of us. It was to the effect, that "this man" was to be put under guard until further orders, being suspected of entering the Confederate lines as a spy. There were also instructions in regard to keeping a close watch over me, and a warning that the guards would be held responsible for my safe-keeping.

"It's all right, tumble in there," said the guard, as the order was finished; "I guess you won't break out o' here afore night."

The tent was a large one, capable of holding twenty persons, and stood quite a distance from any other, being close to the road, and on a piece of pasture ground. There was a circle of guards around it, and I entered without a hope that I should leave it again, except at the will and consent of the guards. There were three soldiers inside, who greeted me with the yell of "more codfish" as I entered, and who uproariously demanded to know if I had any money, and wanted to play euchre. Of course none of them knew me for a Yankee, but supposed that I was a Tenth man, as the letters on my cap indicated. I thought it policy to play a free part with them, and soon made myself at home.

It was now about two o'clock in the afternoon, and I was ravenous for something to eat. They gave me to understand that if I had any money I could purchase food by sending to a sutler; and I trusted one of them with a five dollar gold-piece to be sent on this errand, the trio first stipulating that the eatables should be equitably divided. The soldier went to the door and "fixed it up" with the guard, who demanded and was paid half the money for his graciousness, and in the course of time we got a dozen cakes, a pint of whiskey and a few herrings, from the sutler.

The afternoon was spent in card-playing and song-singing. None of the prisoners so much as asked my name, it being sufficient for them that I was there on an equal footing with them. In a cautious way I drew from them all they knew in regard to late military movements, which was not a great deal, although each one asserted that "he believed there was something up, and that Uncle Robert would soon give the Yanks a send back to the Potomac." I finally rolled off in a corner and shut my eyes to do a little planning.

It was important that I should be on the other bank of the Rapidan before daylight next morning. By mere accident I had been enabled to secure information which could not possibly be obtained by any of my companion scouts, and the safety of an army depended on my speedy return to the Union headquarters. I went over in my mind the whole conversation overheard the previous evening, to be sure that I had forgotten nothing, and then made up the route which the Confederates must take to flank the army of the Potomac and move north. I knew almost exactly where the Union forces

were distributed, where battles would take place in their attempt to head off the movement, and the more I looked over the imaginative map, the stronger were my convictions that a general movement by Lee's army would hardly find a check before reaching the Potomac.

But I was a close prisoner, no avenue of escape offering, and my information was of no account. I rose up, walked to and fro, and was tempted to make a dash through the tent, and trust to luck to escape the bullets which would follow. But reason returned, and I saw that such a proceeding would bring about the very thing which must be avoided.

"Come, old boy, don't look so savage!" shouted one of the men, seeing my anxious countenance. "If you ain't in for anything more serious than getting drunk or lifting a blanket, you'll be let out to-morrow."

I sat down with them again, and after some general conversation, ascertained that all of them expected to receive their freedom that evening. It seemed to me that if I did not escape from the tent before midnight, I should surely commit some foolhardy move, so great was my impatience to get away. I stooped down and looked under the canvas, but a sentinel aimed his musket at me and shook his head warningly. I walked to the door, but the sentinel there ordered me back. Clearly and plainly I was trapped.

The hours went slowly by, and about five o'clock, just as it began to grow dusky, five whooping and shouting infantry men were brought in, all highly intoxicated. This made a crowd numbering nine, and for the next hour there was so much yelling, singing and dancing, that I almost forgot my troubles. Directly after seven o'clock, and just as we had finished our meagre supper, a sergeant came to the door of the tent and cried out:—

"You, there, Hank Bronson! The captain says that you can report yourself at his quarters."

Bronson was then playing a game of "cut-throat" with the two other men who had been my companions all day, and he waited two or three minutes until the game was decided in his favor before going out. The other two then continued the game to see which would be victor. In the space of a second I had a plan for escape, and in a moment's time was carrying it into execution. I reasoned like this: If the three were all put in here at once for the same thing, all should be liberated at once, or one will not be kept much longer than another. If Bronson were called for, these other two will soon get messages. Thus reasoning, I made up my mind to go in place of one of them. I went over to where they were seated on the straw, and pretended to take a lively interest in the game. Their caps were lying beside them on the ground, and I carefully removed one and placed my own in its stead. The next thing was to keep them interested in the game until one or the other was called for by the officers. At that moment one of them had only a single more "point" to make, and I saw that the game would soon be ended. Accordingly taking a gold-piece from my pocket, and tossing it down on the cracker box, I offered it as a gift to the one who should win three games out of five, several "points" to constitute a game. The offer was hailed with shouts of satisfaction, and they immediately dealt out the cards for a new game. While they were thus engaged, I rose up and began walking. Five minutes had not passed before I heard some one talking to the sentry outside, and directly after a corporal put his head inside the tent and shouted:—

"King, you good-for-nothing rascal, you have leave to return to your tent, but you'll get it strong next time."

"All right—come directly," responded King. And the two went on with their game, having eyes for nothing but the cards and the gold-piece.

With my heart thumping and bounding, and feeling a weakness in the knees, I waited two or three minutes, and then, striking up a whistle, I walked out of the tent and down the road. The sentry was so close to the door that I brushed him, but he had no suspicions. Not being the man on duty when I was incarcerated, he perhaps had no knowledge that I was other than a regular Confederate solider. I did not understand the lay of the ground at all, and was bewildered the moment I reached the tents outside. It was well into the evening then, quite dark, and my object was to reach the Rapidan and cross as soon as possible. But I could not determine the direction of the river, and it was important that I should cross it at the ford, where I had knowledge of the current and bottom. Thinking that I should recognize the road by which I came up, I began a hunt for it, and the result was

that I had a long tramp for nothing, finding myself at length in the midst of an encampment of Carolina troops. Coming along to where a solitary soldier was reading a letter by the aid of a small camp fire, I informed him that I belonged to the Tenth Virginia, and was trying to find my way to camp.

"Tenth? Tenth?" he repeated; "Why, your regiment is located over there, about a mile away;" and he pointed out the direction.

"Possible!" I ejaculated; "I thought they were over there (pointing) by the lower ford."

"Lower ford!" he repeated, with great contempt in his tones, "the lower ford is over in this direction (pointing), about half a mile from here. That road right there leads to it." And he turned to his letter again, half-believing that I was insane.

The road indicated by him was not ten feet away, and I slowly sauntered towards the ford. As I walked slowly along, I made a calculation on my chances. In case the provost-marshal had not returned, my escape from the guard tent would not be discovered before morning, unless, indeed, the meddlesome lieutenant should leave his post at the ford to look me up. Dressed in Confederate uniform, posted as to regiments and locations, I had but little fear of making good my crossing, and I pushed along faster.

I met no one until getting within forty rods of the reserve, when a couple of soldiers were encountered with wood in their arms. Whether true or not, I imagined that some of my questions excited their suspicions. At least, they questioned me very closely, wanted to know why I was idling around the reserve, and either took me for a Confederate intending to desert, or for a picket who had deserted his post. At least, so it seemed to me, and I left them in an abrupt way and plunged into the underbush. Getting a few rods away, I laid down. I was not yet sure of the course of the river, and neither could I safely go further until ascertaining the picket salutations. I had not long to wait. Suddenly, away ahead, I saw the flash of a musket, and directly there was a fusilade, Union and Confederate pickets whanging away at each other across the stream. In five minutes I was pretty sure of the locations of the Confederate pickets, and could very nearly tell the exact location of the ford. Slowly and cautiously I made a wide circuit around the reserve, and then struck out for the Rapidan.

There was a matter I had failed to consider. I had forgotten that the flank movement soon to be made would have the effect to double the vigilance of the pickets, in order that no information should cross the river, but I was directly made aware of the fact. As I got within thirty rods of the river, I dropped down on "all fours" and crawled forward as softly as an Indian warrior. In a measure, I was "going it blind," as I could not see thirty feet away, and the men had entirely ceased firing. Going forward foot by foot, pausing long to listen, I had reached within twenty feet of the river, and was listening to get the location of the nearest picket, when the Unionists opened fire again. None of the Confederates responded for a time, and then a musket was discharged not fifteen feet from my clump of bushes. I had crept almost into the arms of two men, and the slighest noise would have betrayed me. They both began firing as rapidly as possible, and soon drew the attention of twenty Union muskets. In five minutes there was a perfect stream of bullets, and they cut so close to me on every side that I believed I should be hit in spite of my lying flat on the ground. By the flashes of the guns, I could make out the river and its direction, and a little study convinced me that I had hit it at a wrong point, the water being too deep for fording, and the banks on both sides so steep that one must be observed in getting down or up. After arriving at this conclusion, I headed down stream, knowing that the regular ford could not be over sixty rods distant. I had to creep every step of the way. There was a line of bushes along the river bank, but back of this the ground was covered with sticks, logs, bush, and here and there a small tree. I had to crawl cautiously, as the pickets were scattered along on the bank, and in one instance I passed within twenty feet of a soldier without his suspecting my presence. I could have crept up and stabbed him in the back, but there was nothing to be gained. The nearer I approached the ford, the more plenty were the pickets, and my first reconnoissance showed me that a rat could not enter the water there without being discovered. There were at least ten men stationed at the ford, or just above and below the road, and my heart fell like a lump of lead as I saw that all escape was cut off.

The reader may have asked himself why I

so persistently sought the ford, instead of taking to the water anywhere and swimming across. There were two reasons. First, I was still suffering from a gunshot wound in the leg, healed over, but still so painful that I did not dare trust the limb to help float me over a deep river whose waters were then as cold as ice. Second, I never yet saw a soldier who would not risk a shot to wade a ford instead of swimming an unknown river and getting every garment thoroughly soaked. Besides, every rod of the bank was guarded, and I had my doubts if it were possible to make a crossing anywhere on the Confederate front. Feeling sick at heart, and being chilled by the cold night air, I crawled away from the ford back up the hill, and laid down in the bushes about twenty rods from the camp of the reserve. There were three or four fires smouldering in the camp, and from my position I had quite a fair view of two or three groups of soldiers, I saw them moving about, sitting down, playing cards, and all were waiting for the next change of pickets. It was now midnight, as near as I could judge, and I believed that the change would soon be made. In some cases the pickets were made to stand their post all night, while in other instances they were relieved every four hours, particularly where it was necessary that a strict watch should be kept.

As much from curiosity as anything else, I crawled slowly towards the camp, which was in a sort of hollow, where the fire could not be seen from the other side of the river. Coming up within about thirty feet of the first tent, I found that I could overhear most of the conversation among the soldiery, which was, however, of no great interest or importance. As I got a closer view, I saw the form of a soldier stretched in sleep just outside the tent, his blanket drawn close over his head. It came into my mind to creep softly up and murder him, and my hand sought the haft of my bowie knife. But I was the next moment ashamed of the thought, the soldier having nothing to do with my misfortunes. There was a plan working through my brain to make that sleeping man aid my escape, but I could not make it plain. I worked it over and over again, and while I was thinking, a sergeant got up from a camp-fire, and I heard him say:—

"Come, boys, it only lacks seven minutes of twelve—get ready to fall in."

Just then I got the plan like a flash of lightning. The soldiers scattered this way and that, began to bring out their guns and tighten up their belts. Quickly and softly I crept forward to where the soldier was asleep, laid down close beside him, and seized his musket. With a heart beating so fast that it nearly choked me, I waited for the signal.

"Fall in, men!" came from the sergeant, in a low tone, and I heard the soldiers gathering together.

My man was sound asleep, and I rose up, grasped the musket, and, with head down and one hand busy rubbing my eyes, I passed around the tent and took a place in a line of nearly forty men. No one paid me the least attention, all being half asleep. We were facing one of the fires, and the sergeant stood in front of us and used the light to read the list of names. One name after another was called, with a "Here!" from the owner, until he called "Richard Burk." No one answered, and when he called the name a second time, I responded to it in a prompt tone. I trembled as I did so, for I knew not but his best friend might stand next to me. There was silence for a moment, and I thought I was discovered, when the sergeant closed his list, and we marched away.

I was the eighth man on the line, and, as we first marched to the ford, I was among the ten told off for that relief. We were not stationed in a group, but five were posted on each side of the road, close down to the banks of the river. I was trembling in every nerve. I expected that when we were posted, some of the men must discover that I was not Burk. As the main relief passed on, I made up my mind to rush for the ford as soon as suspected, trusting to luck and the darkness to escape the bullets. A corporal was in charge of our little squad, and he immediately marched us under a thorn tree which grew close to the bank.

"Keep your eyes traveling and your ears open," said he, by way of warning, and we all stood looking across the Rapidan. I could touch the man on either side of me. I was in constant fear that some one would make some inquiry, supposing me to be Burk, and this fear worked on me so that I was presently damp with the sweat which started from every pore. Seeing one of the men peer up the stream, as if noting some object, I took three or four steps in that

direction, and then stood still as if intently listening. The four men retained their positions, and I continued where I was, thus reducing the chances of detection. Up and down the river the pickets fired an occasional shot, but everything at the ford was as quiet as death for the next two hours. During all this long time, I stood apart from the rest, planning and rejecting methods of escape, and at two o'clock I was in despair. Seeing some of the rest walking softly about to warm themselves, I adopted the idea, and paced back and forth like a sentry. Then I got a plan. I would extend my walk little by little until I should get close to the edge of the water, and would then throw my gun and make a dash for it. Slowly, but surely, I walked a little further each time, and finally stood at the water's edge. The moment had come! I was just raising my gun to cast it aside, when a hand was laid on my arm, and some one whispered:—

"I say, Burk, have you got any tobacco with you?"

I turned enough to see one of the pickets holding out his hand, and then, without a word, handed him out my plug and waited until he had cut himself off a bit. The taste of the weed seemed to set him in fine spirits, and he endeavored to start a conversation. I cut him off sharp by pointing over the water, shaking my head, and then bending forward as if listening. He took the hint at once and crawled back, and I was left alone again. Not two minutes had passed, when I heard men coming down the reserve, and directly two persons appeared at the thorn tree, and I heard a low and hurried conversation, so low that I caught none of the words. As they talked, a loose cavalry horse came down the road for a drink, and entered the water directly in front of me, wading out until the water covered his knees. As I turned from him, a man left the tree and came straight toward me. As he got within two or three feet, he stopped, peering at me.

"Is your name Burk?" he asked.

As quick as lightning, I recognized the voice of the lieutenant, and also realized that Burk had come down with him to the tree. Giving vent to a yell which was heard plainly by our pickets over the river, I clubbed my gun, gave the officer a crashing blow on the head, and then leaped into the stream. It all happened in an instant, but I was none too quick. Before I had made twenty feet, a shot was fired, and in a moment more a dozen muskets were blazing away. The horse took the alarm and ran for the Union shore, but was shot down after one or two jumps. As he went down, I fell forward over a stone, and had sense enough to let the current float me down several rods. The horse kicked and thrashed in his agony, and the picket turned their whole fire on him, thinking that his movements and mine were connected in some way.

I floated down over the ford into deep water, and saw that it must be swim or sink. I put forth every nerve, heading diagonally across, and felt a grim pleasure to see a fusilade open along the Union line. I did splendidly, and in a few minutes was able to touch bottom and walk to the shore. At the spot where I landed was a high bluff, and I saw that I must travel up stream to the ford road. This was but two minutes' walk. I had just been challenged by the Union outpost, and had opened my mouth to reply, when a sheet of fire shot before my eyes, there was the noise of a great crash, and I went to the ground.

"I think he's coming to his senses." I heard the words one morning, and opened my eyes to see a doctor, nurse, and two or three military men around my cot. All around me were cots containing sick men, and it finally dawned upon me that I was in a hospital. I was about to question the doctor, when he put his finger up, shook his head, and I went off into a sleep as refreshing as an infant's. To be brief, a stray shot from the Confederate picket hit me above the left ear, raked six inches of my skull, and then glanced away. Just eighteen days after, I woke up in the hospital, and the great flank movement had been made, half a dozen battles fought, thousands of men lost, and Lee's troops had retired back again. One day, when I could sit up, General B—— came in to see me, and I gave him my story. He was both surprised and grieved. Could I that morning have put him in possession of my information, half the slaughter could have been averted, even if the Confederate chieftain had not had his first movement checkmated and crippled. I told the nurse and the doctor the whole thing in my delirium, but, regarding it as a whim of a crazy brain, they had passed it all by, and the flank movement found no one prepared.

THE STRUGGLE FOR MAVERICK.*

A DRAMATIC STORY.—IN THREE PARTS.

BY JAMES FRANKLIN FITTS.

PART THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

SECLUDED in one of the upper chambers, as the night of that day came on, Laura Maverick sat on an ottoman at her father's feet, and sought to encourage and strengthen him. He seemed utterly broken down and dispirited; his hands hung listlessly down, and his eyes looked dejectedly to the carpet.

"All is lost—all lost!" he groaned. And she, white and stern, looked at him with scornful pity.

"All is *not* lost, father," she said. "Much may be done yet." And whispering the words through her shining teeth, she added, "and much *shall* be done."

"What?" Oliver Maverick asked, raising his poor dazed face. "What can we do?"

A tap at the door interrupted her answer.

"May I come in?" said a soft voice outside; and as she rose to go to the door, it opened, and Anna Maverick was before her, with a face full of pity, of love and forgiveness. Laura drew herself up haughtily, and folded her arms.

"I had hoped," she said, "that you would allow us a few hours here before you began to exert your new authority. I had hoped that during the little time that remains to us here, we might be spared such an intrusion as this."

"O Laura, how you wrong me!" was the exclamation that met the repellent words and manner. "Do not forget that we are cousins, and that our fathers were brothers; let us two heal up this long bitter feud, and have peace forever in this family. I know your story; I have learned it all from Mrs. Roesselle, and Toby, and others who know all about it; and when I heard it, since you were in the parlor this morning, I said to them that you, too, have wrongs to complain of, and rights to gain. My dear cousin, I tell you frankly that I think my father wronged yours deeply in depriving him of the whole of this inheritance—in causing him to be driven out penniless from his patrimony, for nothing except to gratify a revenge which he had little or no cause for. It seems to me as though at least one half of this estate is by right yours; and in all kindness, my cousin, I offer it to you. If you have done or wished me evil, I forgive it; if I have thought hard of you, please forgive me for it. Let us both make this our home; half of all that my father left shall be yours; and we will live here at Maverick—you, and I, and your father, and Mrs. Roesselle, as one family. Cousin Laura, let us forget the past and be sisters!"

She held her hands, while her eyes beamed with the generous enthusiasm of her sentiments. She had not thought of a repulse; her heart was warm with the feeling of kinship toward the pale, forbidding girl before her, and she truly felt every word that she uttered. Her offer, made on the spur of a sudden determination, and regardless of the counsels of Mrs. Roesselle and Mr. Jenks, to deliberate and advise upon the intention, and the best way of carrying it out, was made in a spirit which she thought must meet with a grateful acceptance; and she now looked with surprise to see Laura stand before her as haughty and reserved as when she first spoke. Laura Maverick heard the eager whispers of her father behind her, "You'll de it, Laura—of course you'll do it," and giving no heed to them, took a moment's thought. Her mother's dying, delirious words came back to her, and with them the long, long sufferings and toils of that mother, vainly expended that her daughter might be mistress of Maverick, and possessed of all that she should have had. She thought of her own and her father's efforts, so nearly crowned with success—of the bitter disappointment of that day, and of the story that her eyes had told her, that this girl was beloved by the man who had almost scornfully cast away the love which she had prayed him to take. The tender, affectionate words of Anna never moved her; her thoughts were of her mother's ambition and hard fate, and of her own; and hardening her heart to

* Begun in the January Number.

Anna's kind advances, she stood proud and obdurate, with hands still folded.

"I cannot do it," was her cold, emotionless reply. "It is all mine by right; I will not take half of it, or a foot it, at your hands."

The hands that were extended towards her dropped, and a look of painful surprise came over the face of Anna.

"Cousin Laura," she said, "I beg of you to be reconciled to me. Take back your refusal; think of it, and say yes. We must be friends."

She came nearer; she placed an arm about her neck, and kissed the white, bloodless cheek. Her arm was impatiently thrown off, and Laura drew further away from her.

"Again I say no!" were the harsh words of the unyielding, unforgiving cousin. "No bounty, no friendship, no peace while we two live! You hear what I say; never think to shake my determination; Maverick cannot hold us both."

Anna persisted no further. Astonished and grieved at the temper of her cousin, she simply said, "Farewell, then. May time soften you;" and went below.

For two hours after this did Laura walk the floor, heedless of the pitiful remonstrances of her father at her conduct in refusing the gift offered her. She had told him that all was not lost; that something might be done to retrieve their fortunes; and she believed it. Her faculties, her hopes, her very passions, had been from the first absorbed in the conquest of this property; she clung to the acquisition of it, as a sacred legacy from her mother; and her jealous heart kindled and burned hotly as she thought how easily this moon-faced girl, as she called her, had won the precious prize of Roscoe Grayle's affection, which she had vainly humbled herself to obtain. Each successive minute ripened her for a desperate deed.

Night came while she was revolving these bitter feelings and the dark suggestions that sprang from them, as she stepped out into the hall, intending to go into the open air for a few moments. She went no further than the first balusters; the sound of voices in the hall below arrested her steps, and caused her to listen. The words were easily distinguishable as the voices of Roscoe Grayle and Mrs. Roesselle, and their words came plainly to her ear. She learned from them that the excitements of the day had thrown Anna into a slight fever, and that Mrs. Roesselle had put her to bed and given her a composing draught. The lady informed Mr. Grayle, in answer to his anxious inquiry, that it was of itself a very trifling matter, but that she deemed it important that the girl should sleep the unusual excitement away. She was then asleep; and Mrs. Roesselle meant to come up at twelve o'clock, to administer another sedative, if necessary. A good-night was then exchanged between them; the door of Mr. Grayle's room was heard to close, and the silent watcher saw Mrs. Roesselle go down stairs with her lamp.

Laura Maverick made no effort to resist the dark temptation which came to her with the words she had heard. She waited until she heard the closing of the door of Mrs. Roesselle's sitting-room, and then went silently down, and out by the front door. The moonlight streamed down upon her weirdly through the giant elms as she ran along the paths: and presently she stopped at the flower-beds, and listened. The clock in the hall rang out the hour of nine.

"Nine o'clock!" she thought. "It must work for three hours; and that will bring it just after that woman has been up to see her."

She turned to the flowers. She shuddered, and then was vexed at herself because her hand trembled. "It is the chilly night air," she said; and stooped to gather something from the flower-bed.

But she did not tremble because of the night air. It was because a thought of murder was in her heart.

She hesitated, and thought again. She went back in thought only six days—so short had been the time in which this chain of events had occurred—and saw herself standing by her own little flower-beds, in the cottage-yard on the river, idly meditating on the deadly effect to be produced by the simple mingling of certain green leaves, as she had read it in the old volume. Only six days had passed; and here she was, prepared to use that fatal knowledge in one last desperate attempt to win the Maverick estate for herself.

That strange unnatural brilliancy filled her eyes; her face and hands were cold as the moonbeams that rested upon them. She gave a sigh to the remembrance of days and scenes of youthful innocence and happiness that surged up to her from the past, and filled her soul with fond, wild regrets—and then the tigress within her triumphed.

"I must go on," she said. "I dread what lies behind me—not before me. I have no life to live if what has been done must stand; I *have* a life to live, when it is overturned."

She stooped again; and gathering a handful of green leaves here and there, wrapped them closely in her handkerchief. With rapid and stealthy steps she returned to the house, and ascended unperceived to her room.

Her father was there, sitting in the same posture, with his head in his hands. She placed her hand on his shoulder, and shook him out of his stupor. He looked up vacantly.

"I told you," she said, "that we could and must do something yet. I meant that we could and must prevail. I will tell you how."

His eyes dilated with surprise, with fear, and finally with hope as she showed him her handkerchief, explained the properties and the use of what what was within it, the situation of Anna Maverick's chamber, immediately beneath them, and the certainty of accomplishing her destruction—swiftly, secretly, silently by means of the poison.

"Are you in earnest?" he asked, with new animation. Her eyes glittered in the moonlight; her hands compressed the bunch in the handkerchief; her tongue gave a quick "yes."

"We shall be discovered," he objected.

"We shall not be discovered. At twelve o'clock Mrs. Roesselle will go to her room to give her another draught; at half-past eleven we will be concealed in the parlor, on the watch. Everything will be quiet; you have only to enter her chamber and press the handkerchief close over her nose and mouth. Death follows, almost instantly, without noise or alarm. No sign or trace of the cause is left behind; the doctor will most likely call it heart disease. But you must do it."

"You can do it better," the father whined. "You are light of foot, and will make no noise. I"——

"Pshaw!" she interrupted, with impatience. "She has taken soothing draughts; she will be sound asleep. There is no danger; there need be no fear. I cannot do it, because—well, because she kissed me! I want her dead, but I can't kill her myself. Be as resolute for a little while as you were yesterday, and all will be well."

He sat upright and passed his hands through his tangled gray hair, and tried to shake off his numbness of mind. Laura went to the window and thought to herself of the other reason why she declined to be the bearer of death to Anna Maverick.

"The Italians have a proverb," she thought, "that a woman who kills her rival never prospers in love. However that is, I'd rather let him do it."

The moon shone down full in her face; far and wide, that night, which that moon found so pitiless. And it shone through the half-curtained window of the room underneath her, on a sweet young face which pressed a peaceful pillow, while dreams of love and friends visited her slumbers.

CHAPTER II.

AT eleven o'clock, Roscoe Grayle, sleeping in the room opposite that of Anna Maverick, awoke and sat upright. The first stroke of the clock awakened him, and he counted until the eleventh, as they rang and vibrated with a pealing sound through the silent house. He had slept soundly since eight o'clock, till within a few moments, when his slumbers grew light and restless, and the stroke of the clock easily roused him. He saw the moonlight outside; he heard nothing to alarm him; all was quiet and peaceful; and still, an undefined sense of impending danger weighed upon him. And that danger seemed to refer to Anna Maverick. What secret of psychology can account for this phenomenon, we know not; it has often been exhibited, and science still puzzles over it. And in this case, as in every other of its kind, reflection only increased and aggravated the fear. Without apparent cause, it grew upon its own suggestion, until Mr. Grayle could bear it no longer. He rose from the bed, half dressed himself, put on his morning-gown, and went silently down to the door of his aunt's room, where he tapped.

"It is Roscoe, Aunt Helen," he said, in a low tone. "Please come to the door."

"In a moment, nephew," she answered, from within; and in less time she opened the door and met him in her wrapper, with a lamp in her hand and her unbound hair streaming over her shoulders. Her face at once betrayed her alarm, without the utterance of a word.

"Don't be frightened, aunt," the nephew hastened to say. "I don't know that anything is wrong; but I can't sleep for thinking of Anna. After what has happened, I am afraid to have her sleep where those people can reach her. I may be exciting alarm without any ocsasion; but after what has occurred in this house since I have been here, I believe them capable of almost anything. You"——

Mrs. Roesselle understood him, and gave a start of real alarm.

"Good heavens, are *they* here yet?" she exclaimed. "When Anna came down about the middle of the afternoon, grieved and troubled by the treatment which that dreadful girl gave her, I was sure she said that they were just about going away. She was nervous and excited, and perhaps she was a little out of her head then, and did not know what she said. They did not come to tea, and I took it for granted that they had gone, and felt heartily glad of it. And you say they are here yet? The child shall not stay a minute longer up there. I think I know better now than to run any risk with those people!"

She called up the girl Ellen, and gave her a light; and the three went up together to Anna's chamber. Soon after Ellen came out with the light, and Roscoe Grayle followed her, bearing in his arms carefully and tenderly the form of Anna Maverick, wrapped in the bed-clothing. She was sound asleep; the first sedative had acted upon her like a narcotic. He carried her down-stairs and laid her in his aunt's bed; and leaving Ellen to watch with her (after stealing a kiss that sleepy Ellen did not see), he returned to his own chamber. The door of Anna's room was shut as he passed; his aunt had remained within to gather up the clothing of the sleeper, and select from the bureau-drawers some necessary articles for her wear.

All this had happened within the half-hour next following the stroke of eleven; and while Mrs. Roesselle yet remained in the chamber just vacated, with its door closed, Laura Maverick and her father came stealing swiftly and silently down to the parlor. They reached it and shut themselves in; and Laura, peering through a crack, eagerly watched the stairs. Impelled by the restless spirit within her, she had accompanied her father hither to reassure him at the critical moment. She stood with one hand on the door-knob, and the other tightly grasping the fatal handkerchief, rolled up in a ball, and confined in her pocket.

"The time is short for the poison," she mused. "But it will work; I can't wait longer than to clear the way."

A light appeared at the *head* of the stairs, to her surprise, after some minutes had passed, and she saw Mrs. Roesselle descending with an armful of female clothing and a lamp.

"She wants to prevent her getting up before she is quite well," was the explanation that instantly satisfisd the concealed watcher. Mrs. Roesselle reached the bottom of the stairs, and went straight into her sitting-room, shutting the door behind her.

Laura half opened the parlor door, and drew her father out into the light which shone feebly from the hall-lamp.

"Now is your time!" she said, speaking in short, quick whispers. "The woman has come down—all is safe. Give me your hand—there! put it into your pocket—quick!" and she transferred the poisoned handkerchief to him. "As soon as I leave you, go back into the parlor and shut the door; wait till the clock strikes twelve, and then go up and do it. Remember! press the handkerchief over her mouth and nostrils, and hold it there—a minute, for safety. She is asleep; she can't cry out; there will be no alarm. Feel of her pulse after you have done it, to make sure of your work; and then come up to me. Be sure and bring the handkerchief away."

She paused and looked up to his face in the faint light.

"Are you resolute?" she asked. "Are you bent on winning your inheritance this night?"

"Yes, Laura." His voice was firmer, and the hand that she took was working with nervous activity.

She bent his head down to her, and kissed his wrinkled cheek with her hot lips.

"Remember what I have told you," she hoarsely whispered. "Don't fail!"

She saw him return to the parlor and swing back the door; and with her heart throbbing in great blows beneath the feverish hands that she pressed over it, slowly mounted the stairs. She knew that it must be some minutes yet before midnight, and she had no need for great haste. Slowly her feet carried her up the first flight; and before she reached the top she was oblivious to all that was around her. Her brain was in a whirl with

thoughts of Maverick regained, of the love of Roscoe Grayle surely her own; of pride, and ambition, and love all satisfied; of victory at last! Unconscious of her exact surroundings, and distantly conscious that she was going to her room, her senses failed to tell her that she had ascended but one flight of stairs. The force of habit turned her to the left; the force of habit brought her to the first door on the right.

Unconsciously, she entered the room from which Anna Maverick had but a few moments before been taken.

The clock in the hall pealed forth the hour of twelve. The sound was heard by Mrs. Roesselle and Ellen, sitting for a while by the sleeping Anna; and by Roscoe Grayle, whom it aroused from another uneasy slumber. Troubled by the same nameless fear, he lay awake and listened. He had not removed his clothing.

Three minutes passed. The fourth had not passed when a thrilling scream from the room opposite pierced the silence of the house, and turned the blood of those who heard it back upon their hearts. And quickly following it came another—a fainter cry, but full of mortal agony. Roscoe Grayle sprang up and rushed in the direction of the noise. He burst open the door of the opposite room and a sickly odor in the air made his head swim with dizziness. He threw the door wide open, and threw up the window; and by the time he had done this, his aunt was at the door with a light, with Ellen following at a distance, almost paralyzed with fear.

"Good heavens, what has happened?" Mrs. Roesselle exclaimed.

He pointed to the bed, and motioned to her to approach with the light. With the first flash of the lamp upon the scene he had recognized the faces of those whom he found in the chamber; and his quick mind instantly comprehended the meaning of the sight that was disclosed.

They approached the foot of the bed; he first, then his aunt, finally the girl. They saw Oliver Maverick extended upon the floor, groaning in a frenzy of grief and horror at the result of his act, and an open handkerchief by him. With the sound of that frightful cry he had learned the horrible truth; and while they stood there he passed into the unconsciousness of convulsions.

They looked towards the bed. Upon it lay Laura Maverick, her teeth clenched, her features fearfully contracted, and her nails working into her palms. Her eyes were wide open and staring, and a spasm shook her from head to foot. It seemed to release her for a moment from the acute pain that contracted her muscles, and she looked wildly around. Mr. Grayle saw that she was whispering and bent his head to hear.

"The book!" were her words. "I was bound to fail; the poison was sure to betray me!"

Her eyes rested upon his face, and she beckoned him to bend lower.

"I am dying," she whispered again; and again a spasm shook her. Her face was pinched and sharpened with her intense agony, and looked like the face of a hag. "I have been a wicked woman; you did right not to love me. I die loving you; I have no right to, but I must. I am almost too wicked for God to forgive me; perhaps you will—perhaps Anna will. That pain is coming again—quick—put your ear lower—I've not a minute to live! I'm a wicked woman, and I've no right to love you—but I do—love"——

A third and a harder spasm seized her, and life went out when it ended.

They closed her rigid, staring eyes to the new morning; while in another room the eyes of her cousin opened to its light, and her full heart offered up its prayer to the God of mercy for her who had gone unprepared to her judgment.

The last struggle for Maverick was over.

CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER III.

MAVERICK MANSION, Dec. 9th, 1850.

MY DEAR MR. GRAYLE:—I will acknowledge, to begin with, that I have attended very poorly to your injunction, given me when I bade you and your lady good-by in New York, three weeks ago, to write frequently, and inform you of all that should happen at home. My letter of a week ago I believe merely informed you that the people at the house had set everything to rights again after the general pulling down and putting up, and overhauling of the wedding (and, bless my stars, sir, what a jolly wedding it was, to be sure!), and that everything was going on in a quiet and orderly manner. I have some excuse for my failure to write

since—the excuse of business. When I drew that will for the late Mr. Augustus Maverick, I told him that if one person were to have all his property, I should want no other business than to manage the law part of it, attend to the collection of the rents, dividends, interest, and so on, and be legal adviser generally; and now that you have entrusted me with all this, and have also asked me to exercise a general superintendence over the alterations and improvements going on here at the house, and see that your plans are not departed from—why, you can see for yourself, sir, that I must have my hands about full, even with my son to take charge of all the business of the firm.

I write now principally to inform you of a curious discovery that has just been made here. I came up this morning to see how the carpenters were getting on with the alterations in the suite of rooms on the second floor, which you will remember you design to have thrown into one spacious apartment, for an upper parlor. They had got the partitions pretty much torn away, and were clearing off the hanging fragments, when one of the men accidentally struck the wall on the closet-side with his axe. I noticed that it sounded very hollow, and that the man immediately knocked in several places on the plastering. "There's somethink queer about this," he said. "There's a space between these rooms and the outer wall; and a large one, too, from the sound." "Are you certain?" I asked. He was positive about it, and called to the head carpenter to come and examine it. He came and sounded for himself, and then went into the closet and knocked on the panels. "We can have a larger room here than Mr. Grayle expected," he said, coming out with a knowing look about his eyes. Then he told me that there was without doubt a hidden passage or area there; and I at once ordered him to open it.

Their axes soon brought down the whole width of the partition, back to the closet; and as I live, sir, there was a secret passageway three feet wide, of the same height as the ceiling of the rooms, and as wide as all of them, barring the closet. And while we were looking and wondering over it, one of the men knocked pretty hard on the panels of the closet, and one of them flew open, revealing a means of access to this curious place.

But this was not all. In removing the rubbish that the destruction of this partition had made, a nicely-hemmed lady's handkerchief was found under it. They brought it to me, and I discovered in one corner the initials, "L. M."

You will see that this discovery explains much that has puzzled us in conjecturing about the sources of all the knowledge that those wretched people gained, in regard to what was said and done in the house during the few memorable days that they were in it. I have no doubt that Oliver Maverick knew of the existence of this place, and the means of access to it; and I do not doubt that his daughter, concealed in it on the night of the execution of the will, heard the will read, and heard that it was to be placed under the pillow. You will see, therefore, that once in the sick-room, she knew precisely where to find it. I am very glad that we have made this discovery. It clears up a mystery that has troubled me awfully; for mysteries are not in my line.

By the way—speaking of handkerchiefs—you will remember that the one that caused the death of that unhappy young woman was taken by the doctor who attended the coroner's jury, for the purpose of analyzing the poison that had impregnated it. He testified before the jury, you will remember, that her death was no doubt occasioned by the inhalation of some unusually powerful asphyxiating poison, producing much the same effect as strychnine; but what that poison was he could not then say. I saw him yesterday, and asked him if he had discovered what it was. He shook his head. "I have carefully analyzed the water in which the handkerchief was soaked," he said, "and I am free to say that I know of nothing that would produce exactly such properties in solution. I hope the secret of compounding the thing died with that young woman." And though, as I said, I hate mysteries, I cordially agreed with him.

Your wishes have been complied with in regard to a headstone for her grave. I had expected that her relatives in the city would see to that; but as they did not attend the funeral, so they have never been near her grave. I have caused to be put up a simple slab of white marble over her remains, bearing merely her name, age and time of death.

I had a letter a few days ago from the medical superintendent of the asylum to which Olive Maverick was conveyed. The doctor says that his case is one of incurable,

raving maniacy, and that there is no relief for him short of death, which event he thinks will occur very soon.

The inquiries which both Mrs. Roesselle and your lady (you will see that I write "Miss Maverick" whenever I mention her, and then cross it out) were desirous should be made for the girl, Jane Shorey, have been carefully and diligently made in the towns along the river; and some measures have been taken to find her in the city. Nothing, however, has as yet been ascertained about her, and I presume she cannot be found. It is to be hoped that she is at peace, wherever she has fled; and I trust she is. I think she is the only one who is finally a sufferer by the outrageous villanies of those people.

Mrs. Roesselle appears well and cheerful, and has resumed her management of the household since her return from her visit to your mother. She tells me that she decidedly prefers to preform her old duties in the house; and I simply told her that you intended that Maverick should always be her home, without any cares at all, if she preferred it. She will never be contented without something on her hands to take care of; and I presume it is better so. Her visit to Maryland did her good; and though I think that the terrible trials and burdens of her life will always shadow her kind face, yet we shall find her still cheerful, contented, and perhaps as happy as the average of human creatures.

Old Roger Brill died quietly and without pain, sitting on his bench, last Monday morning. Jerry Small wants his place, and had the effrontery to ask me for your influence to help him get it. I don't get decidedly mad more than once in three or four years; but I *was* just about full of wrath. "You pusillanimous little scoundrel!" I said, and jumped for my cane; but he got nimbly out of the way. I don't think he will show his ill-looking face at Maverick again.

Toby grows infirm, and has been compelled to give up the garden and the orchard. He looked very serious when Mrs. Roesselle told him that he had got too old and weak to work, and that you desired him to take care of himself and take life easy. He said he should be sorry to think that he was not able to do anything more for his kind mistress (as he calls her) and "Miss Anna and her husband," and that he would like nothing better than to have his youth and health again, that he might give it all to them. Excellent old man! He is true as steel, and I hope he may live long to enjoy the rest and comfort that you mean to give him.

About the general management of the farm, it is unnecessary for me say anything. David Terry is emphatically the right man in the right place, and looks sharply to the interest of his employers.

The servants generally are delighted that the ownership of the estate has fallen to their young lady, as they still call Mrs. Grayle, and are pleased with the prospect of her speedy return.

I must make particular mention of one more person—Edson Bayne. While in the city lately I went down to one of the slips, and while there I was hailed by a sailor-dressed man who was just stepping into a boat with a bundle in his hand. Seeing me, he clambered back and seized me by the hand, with a hearty "Halloo, mate! I'm glad to see you, for I believe you're a lawyer that isn't a landshark." He said that he had made one short trip since his visit up the river, and that he was now going on a long one, around the Cape of Good Hope. "We sailors," he said, "never know what voyage may carry us to our long anchorage; but when my hulk drifts out of this world's waters, I know that it will lighten the way to think that I helped to do justice to that young woman—God bless her bright eyes!" I told him that she had married the young man whom he saw at the mansion that day; and he immediately extended his blessing to you, adding the superfluous remark that he wished his timbers might be shivered and his toplights dashed if you were not a fine fellow. I think the vernacular of seamen might be improved; but I have no doubt that he intended to be quite complimentary.

I am glad to learn that you propose an early return to Maverick. Bridal trips, I am aware, are rare occasions in human existence, and should not be unreasonably shortened; but you will find such a joyful welcome back to Maverick awaiting you, and so much in the affairs of the estate to occupy you, that you will not wish to have lengthened your own.

Looking forward with much pleasure to the day of your return, and with my respects to Mrs. Grayle and yourself, I remain,

Very truly, your obedient servant,

ANDREW JENKS.

Almost twenty years more have elapsed since the date of the occurrences last described. Of those who have lived, and toiled, and wrought for good or evil, in these pages, as it were, while this life-history has unfolded itself to the goodly company who have graciously given it their attention, some have sailed away to their "long anchorage," and others still live to learn the lessons of life to their end.

In the upper parlors at Maverick there still hangs an exquisitely finished portrait of Helen Roesselle, painted a short time after the union of the two hearts that were dearest to her. Those hearts loved and reverenced her while she lived; and the children who came after them were taught to look with grateful regard upon the lovely and benevolent but care-marked face that looked from the canvas, and to know the meaning of the words which the hand of Roscoe Grayle inscribed upon its back with indelible characters:—

"*Thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many.*"

NATALIE.

BY I. E. DIEKENGA.

WE are old and we are gray,
And the snows of life's December
Settle quickly on our way,
Natalie!

Wrinkles on thy fair white brow,
Once so smooth,—dost thou remember?—
Fairer then, but dearer now
Unto me.

Fire of eye and grace of form
Tell no more their tale of beauty.
But the heart grows still more warm,
Day by day.

I to thee can boast no more
Of the joy of strength and duty;
But the love, the love of yore,
Lives for aye.

Let us then be brave and true,
Still our journey well pursuing,
Leaving naught to fear or rue,
From care free.

Loving still while life remains,
Loving still through death's undoing;
Until love its love regains,—
Natalie!

ST. LOUIS, MO., 1889.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

AN INTERESTING ISLAND.

THERE are few subjects of more general interest to the inhabitants of this country than agriculture, in one form or another. To those who earn their bread by tilling the soil, it is of the first importance; to those who do not, it is of importance as indirectly affecting their material prosperity. But apart from the question of pecuniary interest, there is an inborn love of agricultural pursuits, which is a national characteristic. In some few persons the taste shows itself so strongly as to lead them to indulge in farming for pleasure. Others, whose time and means will not allow of this, it leads to employ much of their leisure time in gardening. Many are obliged to confine its indulgence to tending a few flowers in pots. They are very few indeed who feel no interest whatever in the subject. The trait has shown itself more or less in all the greatest races that have swayed the destiny of the world.

A peculiarly interesting example of the splendid results which have been brought about by this taste is presented by the island of Ascension, which has been transformed from a comparatively barren rock, exposed to the most terrific and damaging winds,

producing scare enough of the coarsest vegetation to afford a meagre sustenance to a few wild goats, into a pleasant and fertile island, amply supporting in comfort and luxury a very considerable population. This change it took some time and considerable trouble to effect; but before indicating how it was brought about, a short history and description of the island itself may not be out of place.

The island owes its name to having been discovered on Ascension Day in the year 1501, by the Portuguese navigator Juan de Nova Gallego. Two years later it was visited by Alfonzo d'Albuquerque; and from time to time other navigators landed, among them Captain Cook. Such was its dreary aspect, however, that no one was induced to settle on it. But "Jack" has always been famous for his ingenuity, and even here it did not fail him. In the north-west part of the island, which affords the best anchorage for ships, there is a small inlet called Sandy Bay. One of the rocks near the landing-place contains a very curious crevice. This was soon christened "The Sailors' Post-office," and it became an established custom to leave letters there, well corked up in a bottle, which were always taken to their respective destinations by the first ship bound thither which happened to call. This seems to have been the sole use made of the island till the year 1815, when it was taken possession of by the English, who erected a fort and placed a garrison on it soon after the banishment of Napoleon to St. Helena.

Ascension is situated far out in the Atlantic Ocean, off the coast of Africa, and eight hundred miles north-west of St. Helena. It is of a triangular shape, eight miles long, and six broad at its widest part, with an area of thirty-four square miles. It is one of the peaks of the submarine ridge which separates the northern and southern basins of the Atlantic. Its volcanic origin is clearly shown by the numerous crevices and ravines into which its surface is broken, and which are filled with scoria, pumice-stone, and other igneous products. The highest peak, called the Green Mountain, rises to a height of two thousand eight hundred and seventy feet. From this the land, on the north, sinks gradually towards the shore; but on the south it terminates in bold, lofty precipices. Communication with the shore is frequently rendered dangerous by the setting in of heavy seas or rollers, which rise suddenly in the most perfect calm, and break with tremendous force on the beach. The cause of this phenomenon is unknown. Only such plants as required very little water were to be found. Of these, the tomato, castor-oil plant, pepper, and Cape gooseberry were the chief. It was always famed for its turtles, which abound to such an extent that as many as two thousand five hundred have been captured in one year. They are now usually collected into two ponds or crawls, the water of which is occasionally changed. They can be obtained only by purchase, any one taking them on the beach or near the island being liable to a heavy penalty. Fish abound, of which the conger-eel is the most prized. Another indigenous delicacy is the egg of the tropical swallow, or "wide-awake," as it is called on the island. They are largely used as an article of food, ten thousand dozen being frequently gathered in a week. In addition to the goats referred to above, the only other useful product was the wild guinea-fowl, which were found in considerable numbers.

Napoleon's presence, even as a prisoner, in the island of St. Helena determined the English goverment to place a garrison on Ascension. This was in 1815; and for years that garrison was entirely supported on food and water brought there at great expense by ships. The death of the illustrious prisoner in 1821 did away with the immediate necessity for keeping a garrison there; but the Admiralty were anxious if possible to turn the island into a victualing station for the African squadron. To ascertain the practicability of this plan, they appointed Captain Brandreth, in 1829, to make a thorough survey, and use every effort to discover water. We can imagine him diligently examining every portion of the barren and uninviting rock, long discouraged by want of success. With indefatigable zeal, he and his willing workers sank shaft after shaft in the hope of discovering a spring, however far down. His strong belief that one did exist was at length justified. In the Green Mountain, at a great level from the sea, he found one at a depth of twenty-five feet which proved to be capable of supplying all the wants of the island. Large tanks were at once made and piping laid to the garrison.

Having now an abundance of water, the most vigorous efforts were put forth to bring some of the land under cultivation. The most promising parts of the Green Moun-

tain were first planted; and sheltered spots in other parts of the island were chosen, and the ground broken up and irrigated. Recourse was even had to excavating in the side of the mountain, in order to gain the desired shelter. The government did all in their power to insure the success of these attempts. They sent out a trained gardener from the Kew Gardens, who took the utmost interest in his work. Great progress was made with the planting of young trees, shrubs, furze, grasses, and hardy plants. The Australian wattle was perhaps the most successful. Holes four feet wide and three deep were prepared, in which it was planted in layers. The hardiness and rapid growth of those may be seen from the fact that in twelve months they reached an average of between six and seven feet in height. Among the grasses early tried was one kind known by the name of "Para," a case of which was sent out. This grass succeeded admirably, increasing in the most astounding manner, and growing down all weeds and inferior grasses. In 1861, Captain Bernard was appointed governor of the island, and by that time the most thankless part of the task had been accomplished. He displayed, however, the full zeal of his predecessors; and with the able assistance of the gardener, accomplished wonders in the next few years. A scarcity of manure was one great drawback. This was supplied by using the guano which was found in large quantities on Boatswain Bird Island, a small rock that lies off the west coast of Ascension. The rapidity with which sheep fatten on the grass is very satisfactory, nearly doubling their weight three months after importation.

The island is by no means free from vermin. The horse and cattle suffer greatly from a fly, in appearance like the house-fly, but which bites venomously, and causes intense irritation. The "black grub," as it is called there, effects great devastation at times among the plants, and as yet no practical remedy has been found for its ravages. The next destructive enemy is the field-rat, which attacks the root-crops, and feeds principally on the sweet-potato. Land-crabs, too, exist in very large numbers, and add to the destruction. Another animal, the wild-cat, proves itself an enemy, as it lives on the rabbits, and is useless as a vermin destroyer. A determined war is being waged against all these tormentors, a regular system of trapping having been set on foot. In one year, fifty-three cats, seven thousand four hundred rats, and eighty-five thousand one hundred and fifty land-crabs, were destroyed. The thorough cultivation of the ground is also being furthered by the introduction of rooks, minhas, and other birds that help the farmer. With all these drawbacks, the island has been brought step by step from its original barrenness to such a pleasing condition that it now has over thirty-one acres under actual cultivation, producing, among other things, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, pumpkins and turnips; pine-apples, bananas, endive, French beans, leeks, herbs, seedling date-palm and coffee; sugar-cane, guavas, oranges, shaddocks, fig bushes, mulberries and cuttings of shrubs. There is good pasturage one thousand acres in extent for cattle, and five thousand acres for sheep, supporting easily over forty head of cattle and between seven and eight hundred sheep. Parts of the island are now well wooded, and about forty acres are laid out in fruit-trees and shrubbery. Few brighter monuments could be pointed out of the success sure to attend enterprise and unyielding zeal, when well and wisely directed.

THE GOLDEN CIRCLE.

BY WILLIAM WALLACE COOK, F. L. S.

A LITTLE life,
A little strife,
To make that life sincere;
A little bliss
To soften this,
And make us count it dear;
A sudden surge,
The unknown merge
Upon a human's breast;
A grassy mound,
And man has found
His meed of perfect rest.

ENGLEWOOD, ILL., 1889.

THE MASTER OF CRYNANT ABBEY.

BY JULIA A. KNIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

"ARE you all alone, my dear? I thought perhaps that you would be, so I did not stay late; although, really, I was reluctant to come away from the stream, for the fish were rising splendidly." And Doctor Waldron carefully deposited his rod in the corner, and laid aside his hat, on which, and the numerous "casts of flies" wound round it, the rain-drops of an April evening were glistening.

The lady addressed, who had, perhaps, been too much absorbed in her contemplation of the darkening landscape to notice her husband's entrance, with a weary little sigh withdrew from the casement, and turned her face towards him. It was a handsome face still, and, although the first freshness of youth was long since past, time had dealt so tenderly with Mrs. Waldron that now, in her fifth decade, she yet retained many of the charms which in early womanhood had made her a reigning belle.

"I am sorry that you should have deemed it worth while to hurry home on my account," said Mrs. Waldron. "I am accustomed to be alone."

Cold as were the words, the tone in which they were uttered was even colder; and, used as he was to his wife's varying moods, a shadow of pain passed over Stephen Waldron's features.

"I should scarcely have thought that you would have found it very enjoyable among those dismal mountains in such weather," resumed the lady, with an affected shiver; "but everyone to his own taste. Have you met with good sport?"

The stereotyped question was asked in a calmly indifferent way, and she would not have troubled if he had not answered. But the doctor's face brightened up wonderfully at even this poor show of interest in his favorite pastime, and he hastened to display the contents of his creel.

"Look there, my dear. Is it not a capital basket, considering how short a time I was at it?" he said, eagerly. "Just notice that fellow on the top. He is one of the best I have had this season; and you should have seen what a fight he made of it."

Mrs. Waldron's eyes rested for an instant on the reward of her husbands skill; rested so coldly that they might have been the commonest fish extracted from some muddy pond, instead of the symmetrical, spotted treasures of a clear, rapidly-rushing Welsh mountain-stream.

"Are they not beauties?" asked the doctor, drawing aside one or two stray branches of the dainty bed of fern on which they rested.

"Oh, yes, they are very nice!" was the rejoinder, followed by the practical query of "What do you propose to do with them all? I suppose you do not want them dressed? We had trout yesterday and the day before."

"No, my dear, I don't think that we will keep these. I have some news for you. Sir Maurice Gwynne is coming home; I thought of sending them up to the Abbey. I suppose he will not stop my leave, though, under the impression that I am too good a hand," added the doctor, doubtfully.

"Sir Maurice really coming home at last?" echoed the lady, ignoring the latter part of his speech.

"Yes. He is expected this evening," answered the doctor. "They say he is coming to the Abbey to stop."

"Indeed!" rejoined his wife, with the slightest uprising of her shapely shoulders. "I am sure I sincerely pity him. There is no need to look so astonished, Stephen. I pity anyone who is condemned to live in this dismal place. It always seems to me as if those dreary mountains cut Coom-Crynant off from all the rest of the world, and from everything which makes life enjoyable. Of course I do not expect you to see it in the same light," she went on, with a sarcastic inflection in her voice. "I am well aware that it is a capital place for fishing, but that is not the only thing worth living for."

Doctor Waldron stole a furtive glance at his wife's face, and what he saw there warned him that, although not inclined to accept this proposition, it would be wiser not to refuse it. Softly whistling under his breath, which was a habit he had of consoling himself when suffering from his wife's ascerbity, the doctor walked to the window,

and gazed forth; and, as his eyes rested on the landscape before him, he could scarcely find it in his nature-loving heart to think hardly of Coom-Crynant. True, it was wild and rugged enough,—wild and rugged even for North Wales,—yet there was a glorious picturesqueness about those encircling mountains that Mrs. Waldron so condemned, which, ever changing with every change of sky, were yet grand and beautiful always.

Strikingly beautiful was Coom-Crynant on this April evening, the purpling shadows of the landscape fading away in a sweet, mysterious softness born of the coming night, the outlines of the distant mountains blending with the sky, and losing themselves, save where at one point they cut clearly against the rising moon, quietly stealing upward until she marked, as with a flickering line of sparkling silver, the foaming course of the river from which the little township took its name.

A charming spot enough was Coom-Crynant, a paradise to the artist or the angler; but, with a small population so abominably healthy as to produce but few patients, and those scattered at long distances, and not too complaisant in the matter of payment, it was not the most desirable location for a country doctor with but a scanty income apart from his practice.

A few moments of silence, broken at length by Mrs. Waldron's voice.

"Do you think, Stephen, that Sir Maurice Gwynne's coming to reside here will make much difference to us?"

"Well, it will make us a trifle more lively, perhaps, Jane. One more person to know beside the rector, who at present constitutes the 'society' which you miss. That is," he added doubtfully, "if Sir Maurice Gwynne is not above visiting a poor man."

Mrs Waldron cast a disparaging glance around the room, which, while it gave token of taste and refinement, still mutely proclaimed that fortune made not her dwelling there.

"I do not suppose that a baronet with a rent-roll of I don't know how many thousands a year would care to come here much, where there is not a decent room to receive him in. But I was not thinking of that. I meant, is his coming likely to bring you any more practice?"

"I am afraid not," answered the doctor. "You see, Sir Maurice, who was only an Indian officer before this estate came unexpectedly to him, is a man of plain habits and simple tastes, and he will keep but a very small establishment at the Abbey. I fancy"—with a sigh—"that we must never do much more than we are at present doing in Coom-Cyrnant. It is a magnificent place, and there could not be better fishing"——

"Do not talk to me of your perpetual fishing!" she interrupted, with impatience. "We cannot live upon fish and mountains."

"Well, no, my love," he assented with a feeble smile, as if in deprecation of his own small joke, "or no one need starve in Coom-Crynant.

"It is hardly a fitting subject for levity," was Mrs. Waldron's comment on this. "Something must be done, and done soon. Our daughter—our darling Isabelle—is coming home for good at midsummer; and, after the money that has been spent upon her education, it is absurd to think that we must go on living in this humdrum way. We must keep more of an establishment, and get to know some of our neighbors."

"It would be pleasanter," said the doctor dryly; "only there are certain difficulties to contend with, such as your next-door neighbor living six or eight miles off."

"Then, as I have said before, we must set up a carriage," declared Mrs. Waldron, with decision. "After all, it would not cost so very much."

"My dear Jane," answered the doctor wearily, as one returning to an unpleasant topic, yet with a certain firmness in his tone, at which Mrs. Waldron frowned, "we have discussed this before, and it really is out of the question. At present we can just keep out of debt, no more. The luxuries you speak of we cannot afford."

"Then I am sure, if our means are so straitened," retorted the lady, "you have no business to be burdened with other people's children. Charity begins at home, and"——

"Hush, Jane!" interrupted Doctor Waldron, almost sternly. "Pray do not let us discuss this. Ethel is the orphan of my dearest, truest friend. Would that he were alive now! I am doing no more for his than he would have done for mine had I been taken first. His dying breath commended her to my care, and I'll keep my word to Walter Emerson."

"Oh, no doubt!" rejoined his wife with a sneer. "You seem capable of any romantic folly. But what I am saying is as much for

Ethel's good as ours. She is nearly twenty, and it is time that she was placed out to do something for herself. For many years she has been a burden on you."

"Which I have never felt," he put in.

"Perhaps not; but I have," she rejoined.

"Not now, not now!" said the doctor, and a warning finger checked his wife's words; and then there was a quick, light step heard approaching, the door opened to give admission to a slight, girlish form, and Ethel Emerson stood before them.

Mrs. Waldron gave a slight start of surprise at her sudden entrance, a mute protestation against the girl's brisk activity. For in all her movements Ethel was free and impetuous as the winds that swept the mountains over which her feet were never weary of roaming. But gradually, as her vision took in the figure before her, unnoticed at first in the dusk of the room, the lady's surprise merged into displeasure, and there was an unpleasant ring in the voice which inquired:—

"Why, Ethel, child, where have you been so late that you should come home in this guise? Do you know that your hair is all down, and your hat flying off your head? And, yes, positively"—touching the girl's dress with one dainty finger—"your skirts are soaking wet!"

Ethel laughed a merry ringing laugh, which because of the elder lady's horror-stricken face she found it impossible to repress.

"It is nothing," she declared carelessly. "I was awkward, and tumbled into the water. O uncle," for such was the doctor's appellation by his wish, "what lovely fish! And only to think that I was not with you! I rambled ever so far, thinking that I should find you fishing on the Bryn-Glas; and then night was coming on, and in crossing the stream my foot slipped; and, really," with a comical glance at her wet garments, "I think I am just a trifle damp."

"Never mind, my dear," said the doctor. "But make haste and change your things, and there will be no harm done."

"Excuse me," interrupted Mrs. Waldron, with frigid dignity, "but I think there is a great deal of harm done. It is, in my opinion, most unseemly conduct for a young lady to race over these mountains, alone and unattended, at all hours. You will suffer for it some day—will get attacked and robbed, perhaps murdered, by some of the half-savage peasantry."

At this dismal prophecy the girl laughed again. There was something ludicrous in the idea of the natives harming her. In their cottages she was well known, being ever ready to do what she could to relieve want or ease pain. True, her purse was limited enough; but her bright and winsome presence was like a ray of sunshine in their humble homesteads, and the poor, who do not always value sympathy for what it brings, loved her accordingly. Many were the guttural blessings invoked upon her head, and many among those rough but true-hearted mountain-dwellers would have risked life and limb for this gentle "daughter of the Sassenachs."

"I beg your pardon for laughing, Mrs. Waldron," she said at length; "but it is so funny to think of any one hurting me. No stranger ever comes here, and I am acquainted with all the natives."

"Which in my opinion is nothing to be proud of. Thank goodness, I know none of them!" rejoined the lady, severely. "I hope, Ethel, that when Isabelle comes home you will endeavor to mold yourself a little by her, to restrain your wild nature, and be more composed, more lady-like."

The bright look died out of the smiling face; but in the gathering gloom Mrs. Waldron saw not the girl's little grimace of dislike. Ethel looked forward with anything but delight to the return of the young lady, fresh from a fashionable boarding-school, and full of graces and accomplishments as out of place at Coom-Crynant as were Isabelle Waldron's showy dress and last new Paris mode amid the rocks and tarns, and all the wild, glorious beauty of nature.

"Come, come, Ethel! I cannot have you loitering in your wet things," interposed the doctor. "That is the way people take cold." And with a gentle hand he turned her to the door.

But at the same instant there was a vigorous pull at the bell. A quick, impatient voice sounded outside, and then was heard approaching the room.

"What a dolt that Jenny is," muttered the lady of the house under her breath, "showing people in here, and you, Ethel, in that disgraceful plight! There, I suppose it is our usual class of callers,—some clumping farmer whose wife is taken ill."

The door was swung open, and revealed, certainly not a clumping farmer, but a tall, soldierly man, followed by the voice of Jenny.

Waldron's hand-maiden, hushed and reverential, announcing:—

"Sir Maurice Gwynne!"

With incoherent apologies Mrs. Waldron sprang to her feet and rang for candles. This was indeed a nice way to receive the new lord of the manor, owner of all the land for many a mile! But Sir Maurice, easy and unembarrassed, stepped into the room, and, as he removed his hat, the firelight flickered on a sunburnt face, not positively handsome, but refined, with well-cut features, wearing about the lower portion a severe, almost stern expression, contradicted by a kindly light in the clear, searching eyes.

"Sir Maurice Gwynne," said the doctor, advancing.

"Well, I suppose so," answered the baronet, with a careless laugh, "so every one about here will have it; but I am so new to the title that it seems almost strange to me. I must crave your pardon for my abrupt intrusion,"—with a bow toward the ladies, one of whom was trying to conceal herself behind the doctor,—"but my mission is rather urgent. There has been an accident at Abermaig, at the station. Nay, do not let me alarm you,"—in answer to an ejaculalation of distress from Ethel,—"it is nothing very serious. The porter there has had his hand badly crushed, and, as the carriage was waiting for me, I thought it would save time if I hastened on to you, and sent you back in it."

"Certainly," rejoined Doctor Waldron, stowing away one or two cases of instruments in his capacious pockets as he spoke. "I will cheerfully avail myself of your kindness. But it is three miles from here to Crynant Abbey. How will you manage yourself, Sir Maurice?"

"Oh, there is but little difficulty about that, doctor!" he responded, lightly. "The legs that used to belong to poor Captain Gwynne have had to do a lot of marching for that individual. I must not allow them too much rest now, because they are the property of Sir Maurice," with a smiling stress upon the title. "You must not let me detain you, doctor; and so you will permit me to wish you all a good-evening."

"It is really most provoking!" burst forth Mrs. Waldron, as the visitor's firm, elastic step echoed in the distance. "The idea of his finding us like this, all in darkness, and Ethel in that state!"

"I do not think he had time to notice me," said Ethel, as she made her escape.

But in this supposition that young lady was quite wrong. The eyes of Sir Maurice Gwynne were very quick, and but little escaped their notice. And they had rested with a strange admiration on the sweet face and supple form, on which the firelight seemed to gleam lovingly, albeit the said face was framed in a mass of disheveled sunny brown tresses, and the graceful figure draped in garments "just a trifle damp."

CHAPTER II.

THE many comments and natural congratulations on the new heir's coming to reside on the estate, wherewith the humble dwellers of Coom-Crynant had regaled themselves, were over. In the dearth of news from the outer world, prevailing in that isolated spot, they had made the most of it. But the excitement contingent on so great an event could not last forever, and so a week passed by and the village settled down to its customary tranquility. It seemed a matter of course now that Sir Maurice, who was as keen an angler as the doctor himself, should be seen with his rod slung over his shoulder, and his creel by his side, taking his way to the sparkling streams; and the peasantry, who entertained the utmost reverence for a scion of the old stock, however distant, were jubilant when they heard his frank, careless voice returning their salutations in those gutturals so dear to the heart of the Cymri.

To Sir Maurice Gwynne himself nothing seemed more delightful than his location among these wild hills. Perhaps it was the utter change from the life to which he had been accustomed which enhanced the charm. The contrast was so great between the verdure of heather-clad moor and mountain, with their soft, wooing atmosphere, and the parching air and sun-dried soil of India.

"I am indeed a fortunate man," said Sir Maurice to himself, as, after a long morning spent in his favorite pursuit, he laid his rod against a huge bowlder, and sat himself down for a few minutes' rest. "Yes, truly the lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places." And the baronet gave utterance to a sigh of complete and perfect contentment.

It was a charming haven of peace and quietude, where, in indolent repose, he had

thrown himself upon the crisp, verdant turf. His resting place overhung a deep, sequestered mountain-tarn, the blue depths of which were flecked here and there by the reflections of the gently sailing clouds, while far away he could trace the course of the brawling, rushing stream, the devious course of which he had followed, until it was lost amid the gray distance of the hills lying so tranquilly under the bright sky.

Presently there was a sound of splashing water beneath, and the echoing rocks gave back some little petulant ejaculations in a sweet, girlish voice.

Sir Maurice Gwynne sprang to his feet, and stole softly to the edge of the jutting rock, and peeped over. On the bosom of the lake a woman's straw hat was floating, gradually drifting farther from land, and at the margin was a young girl, her face wearing a comical expression of amused vexation, divested of her boots and stockings, striving to recover it from the waters. Her bare feet gleamed fair and white as she daintily picked her way amid the golden pebbles; and, as he gazed, again through the young man's heart throbbed that strange, mysterious thrill which he had felt at first meeting with Ethel Emerson. Only an instant his eyes dwelt on the scene, and then, with the innate delicacy of a gentleman, he turned to retire unobserved.

Alas! not heeding where he stepped, he placed his foot upon his favorite rod, and through the still air came a resounding snap that told of its destruction, followed by a little cry of dismayed suspicion from Ethel. And then there was a tremendous splashing of water, as she fled to the shore; and, all heedless where she stepped, a jagged fragment of stone inflicted a cruel cut upon one tender foot, which in her haste and confusion, she did not even notice. The hat was far away by now, borne before the wind, and gently fluttering its ribbons as if bidding farewell to its mistress, whose fingers surely never assisted her with such nervous speed before with stockings and dainty balmoral boots. Meanwhile, the author of the mischief made his way toward her, but by a circuitous path, so that she had somewhat recovered her composure when they met.

"I fear that I have been unfortunate enough to startle you," he said. "May I ask your forgiveness?"

His accents were gravely courteous, as he stood bare-headed before her. And Ethel, blushing furiously to the tips of her little shell-like ears, tried to answer him in the same tone. But, in her abashed timidity, the words she wanted would not come; and, at length, losing all sense of dignity, in her keen idea of the ludicrous, she broke forth into a peal of rippling laughter. A laughter so contagious in its joyous, frank gayety, that he could not but join her.

"I ought not to be making merry," he said at length, "at the result of my own intrusion. But I fear that I am bound to show myself to-day in an unfavorable light. I can at least repair a portion of my fault by restoring to you the truant."

As Sir Maurice spoke, he pointed to the miserable hat; and, without waiting for her reply, stepped boldly into the water. Her voice arrested him.

"Nay, you cannot reach it. Come back, I beg of you, Sir Maurice Gwynne, come back!" And then, as he stopped, irresolute, "You do not know your danger," she added earnestly. "The lake is shallow but a few feet from the shore, and then shelves off without any warning to a great depth."

"Then I must leave the runaway to its fate," he rejoined. "First, because I must obey you, and, secondly, because I cannot swim. You called me by my name," he added, regaining her side. "I hardly dared to hope that you would remember me."

"That is not very remarkable," she answered, demurely. "We see so few strangers at Coom-Crynant"——

"That they are taken an abnormal interest in when they do come," he put in quietly. "I cannot be too thankful for the existing state of affairs," with a grateful bow. "But I would hope not to remain a stranger, though unwilling to forfeit any of the stranger's privileges." Then Sir Maurice added lightly, "I suppose social forms, customs, and observances may not be neglected even here, amid all this wild grandeur of nature; yet I fear that I am transgressing against them all in thus trespassing on your presence. I ought, doubtless, to make my obeisance, and retire; but I do not like to leave you amid all this solitude, Miss Waldron."

"My name is not Waldron," she said.

"I beg your pardon for my mistake," he rejoined. "But," smiling, "you have an unfair advantage over me, Miss"—— And he paused so markedly that she had no resource but to fill in the gap.

"My name is Emerson."

"Thank you." And he thought to himself, "I am glad that she is not the daughter of that fussy old woman," which was his mental and irreverent designation for the doctor's wife. "May we not consider that we have been formally introduced?" he went on. "I can hardly leave you to find your way so far from home alone."

"Thank you, Sir Maurice," she answered, quietly; "but you must not suffer me to take you from your sport," with a wave of her hand to where rod and fishing-creel reposed upon the sward.

"Nay, my angling is over for to-day," he told her. "My rod is broken and useless. And, were it not so, I could not run the chance of letting you be lost amid the wild hills."

"In that you show yourself a stranger," with the merest emphasis upon the word. "I know every stream and pool and hollow, every mountain-pass and track, around us. You need not fear for my being lost, Sir Maurice."

The young man caught a glimpse of her composed face,—composed enough outwardly, although her heart was throbbing within,—and he detected a calm dignity in the words which must not be gainsaid.

"I understand you," he said, a trifle stiffly. "I must ask your pardon for intruding on you so long, Miss Emerson, and wish you a good-day."

Sir Maurice bowed low, and turned away. But, looking back, he saw that his late companion was limping painfully; and, in answer to a low moan of distress, he was again at her side.

"I fear I was unwise just now in my refusal of your escort, and, perhaps, a little ungracious," with a not displeased glance at his anxious face. "I find that I can hardly get on by myself; I have hurt my foot rather badly. Are you sure that I am not encroaching on your kindness?" with a winning little smile.

Sir Maurice Gwynne's pulses were beating wildly; beating as in his forty odd years of life they had never beaten before, and he said a great deal in reply, the gist of it all being that he should only be too happy to accompany her any number of miles. But when, with a pitying look at her distress, he suggested fetching a carriage, she laughed gleefully.

"Sir Maurice, what are you thinking of? But I suppose it is natural for a stranger," with a sly little glance from the demure eyes which went right through the stranger's heart. "What carriage, or anything upon wheels, could come over Moel Dhu? No, sir, I am not going to ride that way either, thank you all the same;" for Sir Maurice had made a suggestive movement of his strong arms, with some intention of snatching up the little frail specimen of humanity before him, and bearing her bodily across hill and moor.

"There—I will lean, if you will allow me, on your arm—so—I hope you will not find my weight trouble you," anxiously, as if she had been a giantess, "and I shall reach home easily enough. This way, if you please; right over the hill, and through the pass of Llyn Eslyn."

It was a long way,—in his heart the young man found it all too short,—and the shades of evening were coming down on Coom-Crynant as they wended their way to the house.

Sir Maurice Gwynne did not neglect the opportunity which fortune had thrown in his way of improving his acquaintance with the doctor's fair ward. The wounded foot furnished him with a good excuse for calling to ask after its welfare. And day after day found him making all due inquiries, until—for the hurt was never very serious—it was so completely healed that it would have been a farce to feign that as a motive for his visits. But by that time the baronet and Doctor Waldron were fast friends, united together in the closest bonds of angling fraternity. Mrs. Waldron, too, whose vanity was much flattered by her visitor's well-assumed respectful deference, commenced to see fishing in a more favorable light, since it furthered her acquaintance with the wealthy young man. The doctor himself was simply delighted with Sir Maurice, and they would be together for hours, smoking and chatting over past exploits, and discussing the respective merits of blue duns, red and black Palmers, March browns, and all the numberless whims and fancies which are a part of the genuine fly-fisher's creed.

And Ethel? Well, she was very happy to sit and listen to it all, and occasionally to chime in, changing the duet to a trio. For she was quite *au fait* in the subject; and the artificial flies which filled the book the doctor was so fond of displaying were nearly all

the work of her own delicate fingers. And, of course, when scheming Sir Maurice knew it, he was seized directly with a desire to learn the art; and then, in obedience to the doctor's wish, nothing loath, either, Ethel could but volunteer to teach him. During his instruction Sir Maurice learned another lesson; that lesson which, when youth is buoyant and love is warm, comes to most of us. It was a very nice and delicate operation, this fly-making, the materials being all of the weakest, flimsiest nature. But, even while her deft and taper fingers were working these, Ethel's fair face, and low, gentle voice were riveting the links of a strong chain around her pupil's heart.

So time rolled away very pleasantly for Sir Maurice Gwynne. Day after day he and the doctor together pursued their sport upon the streams, to the woeful discomfiture of the leaping trout. And at other times, when Doctor Waldron's few-and-far-between patients required his professional services, the baronet, making the excuse that he did not care to fish alone, would walk, with those long legs of his, the three miles between the abbey and the doctor's residence, and enjoy long *tete a tetes* with Ethel, or else, ostensibly in search of ferns, would accompany her far over mountain and marsh, treading the path which love laid out before him, nor pausing to ask "Whither?"

But, alas, this was too good to last. For the lengthening summer days brought Mrs. Waldron's "darling Isabelle"; and before the overpowering presence and the lofty patronage of this damsel, fresh from a fashionable "ladies' college," it was only to be expected that the modest, unassuming Ethel should retire into the background, a position which the doctor's wife and daughter both deemed her eminently qualified to fill. It was plain, however, that the owner of Crynant Abbey held a contrary opinion. The charms and graces of Isabelle Waldron were lavished upon him in profusion, yet she found no favor in his eyes. In fact, the baronet looked upon it as an evil hour when she made her appearance.

The simple songs and dear old ballads to which, warbled by Ethel's gentle voice, he used to listen entranced, were hardly replaced by the piano fireworks and florid performance of Isabelle, with which, by the scheming mother's will, he was so often regaled. And those long rambles over mountain and moor had lost their charm, for Miss Waldron now made a third in the scene. The wild grandeur of nature, which she had never cared for before, was invested with a new charm when viewed in company with a baronet, especially when that baronet was in every respect an eligible *parti*, with a good rent-roll, and an unencumbered estate.

Mrs. Waldron had impressed upon her "darling" that Crynant Abbey was a prize worth winning, and boldly Isabelle dared the venture. With a heroism worthy of a better cause, she faced hill and dale. She was seized with a mania for ferns, for which she delved and scraped, inwardly anathematizing the dirt which defiled her dainty fingers, as she dug them up by the roots, and carefully carried them home, to throw them away. Accompained by Ethel and Sir Maurice, she tramped through furze and gorse, all heedless of the rents in her fashionable attire, through bogs and morasses which made her shudder, and over rocks and jagged shale which played sad havoc with her Parisian kid *bottines*.

So the summer passed away. The autumn came, and Coom-Crynant assumed its loveliest aspect, when, far as eye could reach, the mountains were one glowing mass of blossoming heather and golden gorse, until winter placed his chill hand upon the scene, when the purple glory faded away to sombre russet. Yet a little later, and the doctor, with a sigh, laid aside his rod; for the white mantle of snow came down upon the desolate hills, and the rivers rushed, dark and swollen and turbid, to the sea.

CHAPTER III.

"WELL, my dear, if you insist upon it, we must talk the matter over. Isabelle, will you kindly hand me that coil of flies,—no, not those, the March brown?"

Doctor Waldron's nerves were a trifle unsteady; for, beside the trepidation with which his wife's determined manner naturally inspired him, his mouth was filled with "gut," which, after the fashion of anglers, he was sucking to render soft and pliable; for the winter had passed away, and with the month of March the doctor was again preparing his fishing-tackle.

"Never mind about March browns just now," retorted Mrs. Waldron, with severity. "You have had all day for that nonsense; surely you can listen to me for a few minutes this evening."

"Yes, love," answered the doctor, meekly, "I am all attention"; in proof of which he drew a trifle nearer to the window, and, in the failing light, concentrated all his faculties on a refractory knot.

"I desire to know what course you would consider the best to pursue to procure a situation as governess, or something of the kind, for Ethel?" asked the lady, laying a grim emphasis on each word.

"I can scarcely answer you on so short a notice," was Doctor Waldron's evasive reply; "but I will think it over. I fancied, my dear, that you had given up the idea."

"Then you have made a great mistake," retorted the lady with asperity; "I insist that you do something more, and at once, than think it over. You have had a twelvemonth for that process," ironically, "since I spoke of it last, and now we must strive at something definite. Do you think that it would be any good to advertise?"

Doctor Waldron's distress was unmistakable; but there was no evading the question which his wife was pushing home. He glanced from her inflexible face across at Isabelle, in the hope that she might speak a word for Ethel; but that young lady's handsome features were composed and inscrutable. Ethel stood in her way, a dangerous rival to the designs which she entertained toward the owner of Crynant Abbey.

"Perhaps, after all, there is no real necessity for Ethel leaving us," ventured the doctor.

"Perhaps, after all," tartly rejoined his wife, "we are not growing poorer day by day. We must retrench in some way. And Ethel has no claim on you. It is your duty, —yes, your duty,— to me and to your own child, to consider us first."

"You are so quick, my dear," interposed Mr. Waldron, "you do not give me a chance to explain. I do not know whether it has ever crossed your mind, but it has sometimes occurred to me that Sir Maurice Gwynne regards Ethel with a favorable eye."

"How utterly absurd!" broke in Mrs. Waldron; and, like an echo, but with an additional dash of scorn, "How utterly absurd!" repeated Isabelle.

"Excuse me," said the doctor, "but I do not quite view the matter in that light. I see nothing so very ridiculous in the idea. Probably Sir Maurice will not remain a bachelor all his days; and he will look far and wide," he continued, warming with the subject, "ere he will find a better, truer, more noble-hearted girl than my ward."

"Or a more simple-minded man, ignorant of the world and its ways, than her guardian," finished the lady.

There was a pause. Her husband's words had shown her another line of attack, and, like a good general, Mrs. Waldron prepared to pursue it.

"What you hint at I have noticed myself," she resumed mildly, "and noticed with pain; and it constitutes one principal reason why I am anxious to get Ethel away from here at once. It cannot be imagined for an instant that Sir Maurice Gwynne purposes anything serious in regard to your ward. His rank and station place a barrier between him and a simple, country-reared girl like Ethel,—a barrier which I am sure he is not the man to break down."

"If I thought he was trifling with Ethel's affections!" commenced the doctor, hotly.

"Why, you would think a very foolish thing," interposed his wife. "His attentions to her are neighborly, nay, friendly, nothing more. But Ethel is simple, romantic, and inexperienced." Mrs. Waldron lowered her voice, and added impressively, "I fear that she is too much smitten with Sir Maurice for her own happiness."

There came a low cry of dismay, of wounded pride and distress; but the doctor noticed it not, so absorbed was he with this new trouble which his wife had let into his mind. Not so Mrs. Waldron. One keen glance through the gloom of the evening had shown her Ethel's steps arrested on the threshold by the sound of her own name. That was all. She could not see the crimson face, blushing hotly with a sense of mingled sorrow and shame and womanly indignation.

"Ethel must leave Coom-Crynant at once," went on Mrs. Waldron mercilessly. "I am only surprised that her own dignity and self-respect have not urged her to this course before. She has been a burden on our finances too long. I suppose a nursey governess, or, at all events, something to do with very young children, is all that she is competent for. The question is, which would be the best paper to advertise in?"

Doctor Waldron turned round and faced his wife, with a light in his eyes which very rarely shone there, and which Mrs. Waldron did not like.

"You may advertise as much as you like, Mrs. Waldron; I care not what paper you select;" and the doctor's hand came down upon the table with an emphasis there was no mistaking. "If Ethel chooses to go out into the world, I shall make no objection; but if she would rather stay, this is her home as long as it is mine."

Mrs. Waldron was silenced, but the arrows of her speech had gone home, and were quivering in Ethel's wounded heart.

The same night, when all the house was still, and Doctor Waldron sat smoking in his study, there was a gentle tap at the door, and a voice whispered:—

"May I come in?"

The doctor gave a little start of surprise.

"Why, my dear, I thought you were a ghost, you entered so quietly!" he said, as Ethel Emerson, in her snow-white dressing-gown, with her sunny hair unbound for the night falling like a glory around her, stood beside him. He spoke lightly, but his quick eye marked the traces of trouble upon her pale cheeks. "Ethel, dear, what,—crying? I am afraid you are out of sorts. We must not have tears marring that pretty face."

"You are right;" whatever weakness had beset her was past now, and the voice which answered him was firm and composed as his own; "I have been foolish and low-spirited, but that is all past. Bear with me a while, dear guardian, and promise that you will not deem me ungrateful in what I am about to say."

"Promised, my dear child, as soon as asked," he interposed. "But it is late for you to be up, and"——

She interrupted him with uplifted hand.

"It is useless for me to retire. I cannot sleep until I have spoken. I want to leave Coom-Crynant—and—and you. I must do something to win my own bread. I have been a burden on your kindness already too long."

"A burden too long!" It was the very phrase his wife had used; and, at the words, a light broke in upon the doctor's mind.

"My dear," he said, "you were listening this evening."

"Yes, if you like to call it so," was the quiet rejoinder; "but it was quite unintentional."

"I am sure of that," he answered, quickly. "And you heard"——

"Everything."

"Well, well, it is no matter," he said, soothingly. "My wife as you know, gets a little irritated at times, and is apt to say what her judgment hardly approves. You must not think any more of that."

The girl shook her head sadly.

"It is like your never-failing kindness to say so," she murmured. "But Mrs. Waldron spoke truly. I have been too long dependent upon you. Do not refuse me," with quick, feverish impatience, "do not press me for further reasons; but I would much rather leave Coom-Crynant."

Doctor Waldron did not answer for a while. He was not a man of very quick perceptions; but in Ethel's every look and accent he read that his wife's hints were not very far from the truth, and concluded that his ward's gentle heart had dreamt of a hopeless, unrequited passion. Did Sir Maurice care for her? He had thought so, but his wife said no; and women have a better knowledge of such matters than men. So sadly mused the doctor.

"You will help me to leave you? You will not think me willful or ungrateful?"

The whisper recalled him to himself.

"My poor child," he answered readily, "I will do all in my power to assist you; but remember that you have ever a home at Coom-Crynant."

CHAPTER IV.

BEFORE an untasted breakfast, in a first-class West-end hotel, sits Sir Maurice Gwynne. Some legal affairs have brought him to London on a visit intended to combine business and pleasure. But it has failed most signally in the latter particular; and, despite the attractions of the metropolis, and the numerous sources of enjoyment open to the fortunate proprietor of a well-filled purse, the baronet is longing to return to his country home, unable for a moment to forget the gentle voice, the tones of which are ever present in his heart.

Listlessly he trifles with the viands before him. The culinary department of this hotel is famous for its *chef;* but the baronet's appetite is not to be tempted. He turns over the newspapers with which the table is supplied, but more with the action of a man anxious to kill time than with any interest in their contents. By chance his eyes fall on a few lines in an advertisement column of the *Times;* and, with a quick start of surprise, he eagerly peruses them, but with an

air of doubt and uncertainty, as if not quite able to believe his eyes. Yet the lines contained nothing so marvelous after all. Coom-Crynant is undeniably an out-of-the-way spot; still it has a right sometimes to assert itself to the great world. And so it makes public the fact that, as resident governess, "a lady would be glad to take charge of two or three young children. Apply to E. E., Doctor Waldron, Coom-Crynant, Merioneth."

Sir Maurice Gwynne is a man of prompt action. He evinces it now by pushing away the breakfast things with such vigor that a cup of coffee and the cream-ewer fall victims to his haste, as impetuously he clears a space in which he can grapple with the difficulties of *Bradshaw*.

There is not much time for the train which he must take, and the waiter, accustomed to a staid and dignified class of customers, almost had his breath taken away by the rapidity of the baronet's proceedings. His few belongings—for he travels very simply—are thrown together. The bill is settled, and a cab is at the door, all as if by the aid of magic.

"I am afraid you cannot catch the 9.45, sir; it is"——

The waiter is about to say "impossible," but Sir Maurice springs into the vehicle, and the clatter of the wheels cuts short the speech.

"I must catch the train, cabby," says Sir Maurice; and catch it he does.

The rapid train seems all too tardy for the baronet's impatience; but the longest day and the longest rail ay journey come equally to an end at last, and late in the afternoon there is a great deal of cap-touching and rustic bowing among the loungers at Abermaig, the nearest station to his home, as Sir Maurice springs out upon the platform. The horse for which he has telegraphed is waiting for him; and, hardly pausing to acknowledge the salutations vouchsafed him, the owner of Crynant Abbey gallops off to the residence of the doctor.

Mrs. Waldron is at the window when he approaches the house, and a shade of displeasure appears upon her face. The good lady hoped, during his visit to London, to have got Ethel quietly away. He was to have been absent a fortnight, and yet it is only the third day, and he is back again.

"Surely it is not you, Sir Maurice!" she says, and says it with an extra tinge of complaisance, to make up for her husband, who greets the young baronet a little stiffly. "This is an unlooked-for pleasure; for you told us that you would be away much longer. I thought it was only ladies who were privileged not to know their own minds."

"I can truly say that I did not know my own mind until to-day," answers Sir Maurice meaningly; and, without regarding the questioning look in the lady's face, he draws a copy of the *Times* from his pocket. "This is what brought me home, Mrs. Waldron," pointing to the advertisement. "I think that I know of a situation which would just suit Miss Emerson; and so I lost no time in apprising you of it."

"O Sir Maurice, how good of you!" exclaims the doctor's wife with effusion. "We cannot thank you enough. But why did you not write? We can never forgive ourselves for bringing you all the way from town on so trivial a matter."

"Pardon me, Mrs. Waldron,"—and there is a touch of reproof in his words,—"but, as relating to Miss Emerson's welfare, I cannot consider it trivial. The fact is, the situation is with a very near and dear friend of mine; so I have an interest in the matter. I ventured to think that I could give all the particulars better personally than in writing. If you will excuse me, I see Eth— that is, Miss Emerson, in the garden. I will explain them fully to her."

And, suiting the action to the word, Sir Maurice Gwynne's long legs straightway convey him upon the lawn.

"It is really most kind of Sir Maurice," observes Mrs. Waldron to her husband, with much satisfaction, "most kind and friendly. Have you any idea what the situation is?"

"Well, yes, I have," answers the doctor deliberately, with a provoking smile. The events of the past few days have evidently brightened the worthy gentleman's perceptions, and for once he sees more than his wife. "I believe that Sir Maurice Gwynne is here to offer Ethel the 'situation' which Isabelle has been trying so hard for."

"I do not understand you," rejoins Mrs. Waldron with dignity.

But she does understand him, nevertheless, and, if she could only witness the little scene which is taking place in the garden at this moment, she would be much further enlightened.

Ethel has answered the baronet's greeting in a tone which she tries hard to steady.

But the hand which she extends to him trembles in his grasp like a fluttering bird, even as his own strong fingers close around it with a lingering pressure which will not be unclasped.

"Ethel,"—and it is the first time that he has ever called her so,—"I have come all the way from London in answer to your advertisement."

"You, Sir Maurice? Surely you do not require a governess?" with such a feeble little smile, and a poor attempt at unconcern which he sees through and exults in.

"I hardly can say what I require," is his rejoinder. "Only this day have I discovered my greatest want; and now, being here, I know not how to ask for it."

"I am afraid that you have come to the least likely place to get any great want supplied," she answers him. "A poor governess—in perspective—can scarcely have such power to benefit Sir Maurice Gwynne."

"Unless the governess will accept the situation which he is here to offer her," he rejoins.

"And that situation she has not heard a word about as yet," is the demure reply. "Why do you not explain, Sir Maurice?"

"Because my heart is so full that I know not what to say," he goes on rapidly. "I am not much of an orator, and the words that I want will not come. O Ethel, darling, you know what I would utter if I could! The situation is to be mistress of Crynant Abbey. Take me as your pupil. Teach me to value at its full worth the true and gentle heart which I have learned this day is all the world to me." He pauses an instant, and draws her closer to him. "Ethel, can you say, 'Maurice, I love you'?"

The sweet, shy face, hitherto bent upon the ground, is uplifted. For just one brief second the timid eyes meet his, and then droop again; but in that second of time he reads what his soul rejoices to know.

"Dearest, my own!" he whispers. "Come! The pupil is teaching the governess her first lesson. Say after me, 'Maurice, I love you.'"

In obedience to her teacher, her lips murmur something; but the ears of love are keen, and Sir Maurice hears, and is content.

"My dearest," he asks, after a long pause of happy silence, "did you think that I could let you leave Coom-Crynant? Why, Ethel, did you want to run away from me?"

In her old frank and fearless way her eyes meet his as she replies:—

"Because, Maurice, I thought that you did not care for poor little insignificant me; and—and—I was growing too fond of you."

"When you fancied me so careless and neglectful, were you, dear one, really learning to love me?"

"A very great deal more, sir, than I am afraid you deserve," she responds archly.

"What a blind dolt I have been!" he says. "To think that I should need that advertisement of yours to teach me my own mind, living near you, and seeing your dear self every day!"

"People never set a value on what is nearest to them," she says.

Sir Maurice Gwynne stops short. They are approaching the house, and another step will bring them into view of the windows. It is the last chance for a lover's privilege, and he winds his strong arms around her, and presses her passionately to his breast.

"You are wrong for once, Ethel," he whispers, in her ear. "Nearer you cannot be; love, I prize you beyond all the world."

So, with her hand resting upon his arm, they enter the house, and vague presentiments force themselves upon Mrs. Waldron that her pet scheme is failing. Apparently there is no clear or definite reason why the doctor should act thus; but his perceptive faculties are brightening each moment, and rising from his chair without a word, he gravely walks across the room and grasps the baronet's hand with a grip which makes his knuckles tingle.

"I have explained the whole business to Ethel," says Sir Maurice,—and he says "Ethel" as coolly as possible,—"and she has consented to accept the situation."

"We are grateful for your condescension, Sir Maurice Gwynne," answers Mrs. Waldron in her most stately manner,—"I speak for my husband and myself, and our ward, Miss Emerson,"—with pointed emphasis,—"but, as her guardians, you will pardon my saying that it would have been better had we been consulted first. With regard to this situation"——

"It is one of which I may be excused for saying you can hardly disapprove," interrupted the young man. "It is to take entire charge of a very near relative of mine, whose education has been much neglected, although I am glad to say that he is tractable and

docile, and will pay every attention and respect to his governess."

"And the age of the boy?" inquires the lady.

"Well, I must frankly admit that he is older than are most lads who require female tuition; but it is considered to be better in his case. He is quick-tempered, and impatient of restraint; but I am sure that Miss Emerson will be able to manage him."

"It is rather a grave responsibility," rejoins Mrs. Waldron. "May I ask what—what—that is—how much"——

She is casting about in her mind for the most genteel term regarding remuneration, but Sir Maurice cuts in with:—

"You mean what salary will Ethel receive? Well, there again the terms are unusual, but I should consider liberal. The idea was for the governess really to be treated as one of the family. That is, any sum which she wanted for clothes or pocket-money she would apply for to the master of the house, and have, of course," he adds, with a significant smile at the girl who is blushing furiously at his side. "Ethel will understand that I mean in moderation. I fancy that her employer would expect her to keep her own personal expenditure within, say, a thousand a year."

This was too much for the doctor. Again he walks across the room, and again in silence grips the speaker's hand. His wife can hardly speak for astonishment. This last stroke seems to take her breath away; but she has a certainty of the truth at last.

"Sir Maurice Gwynne, are you speaking seriously, or is this a jest?"

"Mrs. Waldron, I was never more serious in my life," answers the baronet. "And, if I have not spoken out as plainly as I might, I must ask you to accept my diffidence as an excuse. I hardly dared to ask you for this dear treasure;" and his arm draws the "dear treasure" more closely to him. "But I am the pupil,—by promising to superintend whose welfare Ethel has made me the happiest man in Wales this day,—and the situation is to rule over Crynant Abbey."

Again the doctor crosses the room, and again goes through the same performance as before, but this time not in silence.

"Maurice, my dear boy, I am so glad," he says, "for Ethel's sake and for yours. She is a prize that any man might be proud to win. And I am glad for myself that you are not going to take my pet far away. It is good to think that we shall all still be living near. And what a time you and I will have with the trout this season, though they do not rise very well as yet! I was out to-day, and did very little. But when April comes —why"—and the doctor bursts into a jolly laugh—"April is come! It is the first to-day; and, Sir Maurice, you have taken a cruel advantage of our innocence. You did not know it, you say?" questioningly, in response to a shake of the baronet's head. "Ah, well, I forgive you, and hope that all April fooling may turn out as happily as the little joke which has been played on us this day by the master of Crynant Abbey."

A CLAIRVOYANT REVELATION.

BY W. H. MACY.

ABEL ROWLAND, my shipmate in the Occident, was a pale, nervous little fellow, who looked like anything else than a sailor; and, indeed, his qualifications in that direction did not much belie his looks. His physical strength was far below that of the average of young men, and the same was true of his powers of endurance. His vision, too, was somewhat impaired, so that he was quite useless for a trick at the mast-head. But, as everyone is good for something, it was found that Abel could steer a capital trick at the wheel; an accomplishment which every seaman can testify, is rather a natural gift than an art to be acquired by practice and experience. The best helmsman among a ship's company is usually some fellow who is good for little else.

So, as steering was Abel's forte, he was made very useful by being kept at the wheel a large share of the time during his watches on deck. Being a quiet, willing lad, who appeared ever anxious to do his very best, and ever conscious that this wasn't much, he

was petted and patronized in a pitying sort of way by his more robust, rough-and-ready shipmates, and rather favored by the officers in matters of duty.

Mr. Gibbon, the mate, in whose watch Abel was stationed, soon made a discovery which much enhanced the boy's importance in his eyes. Previous to sailing on this voyage, the mate had given much attention to the subjects of animal magnetism and psychology, and had found that he possessed the magnetic power to a high degree. Bestriding his hobby, he had at various times on the outward passage tried experiments upon one and another, but with very indifferent success. I can never think without a hearty laugh of his attempt to mesmerize me; and how elated he was when I, after the most earnest solicitations on his part, consented to submit to his manipulations. I pretended to be yielding gradually to his influence, while he, bringing his face close to mine, put all his strongest spells and passes in requisition. His success, as he supposed it, made him breathless with excitement. He threw his whole soul into the work, and so well did I play my part, that the astute third mate, who was at the time the only spectator, was as completely humbugged as was Mr. Gibbon himself. I finally allowed my eyes slowly to close—as they thought, in unconscious ecstasy, but really because it would be easier for me to preserve my gravity.

A number more rapid passes after my eyes were shut made assurance doubly sure, and the mate, now speaking for the first time, said, triumphantly:—

"I have got him now, solid! He is in the highest mesmeric state, and you may be prepared to see strange results."

"Do you think I can't wake him?" asked Mr. Brown, the third mate.

"I don't believe any one can wake him until I am ready for him to come out of it."

"A deck-bucketful of salt water would do it. I'll bet ye a pound of tobacco on it, sir."

"I'm very sure it wouldn't; but I don't want you to try it now. It might spoil some experiments that I have in view; and now that I have found the right subject to operate upon, the chance is too precious to be lost."

"I've heard tell that when a man was magnetized, you might prick him or cut him and he wouldn't feel it at all. Now I don't believe it. I think if I was to jab this roping needle into his leg it would bring him on his feet."

I had one corner of my eye open watching, for fear the matter-of-fact old sailor might suit the action to the word. But the threat of the needle was only a feint to divert my attention from his grand flank movement. There was a tin cup of water standing conveniently at hand on the booby-hatch; and just as the mate commenced his catechism by asking, in a solemn tone, "Do you see anything now?" a cold douche struck the back of my neck. It brought me erect with the suddenness of a jack-in-the-box.

"Yes, I see and feel, too!" I gasped, as the chilling stream trickled down my spine; and as soon as I recovered my breath, joined in the hearty roar of laughter from Mr. Brown. The astonished mesmerist acknowledged himself sold, and reckoned another on his list of failures.

But nothing daunted, he persevered in operating upon anyone who would humor him; and in Abel Rowland he did indeed find a susceptible "medium." The boy seemed rather to like it, too; and, after a little time, the mate's influence became so completely established over him that a single pass, in connection with an effort of the will, was enough to spellbind the delicate youth. The mate would halt him with a single word as he was passing along the deck, look at him, fix his attention, and—*presto!* he was off into what old Dan Dennis used to call the "cipher-logical" state; broad awake, but with his acts completely under the sway of Mr. Gibbon's will. I have no taste for metaphysics myself, and cannot go into the philosophy of the thing, or explain how this was brought about (for indeed, who can?); but I know the result as I have repeatedly witnessed it. After getting Abel into this state, he could then, by further operating upon him, put him into a trance, and *transport* him whither he pleased. By a series of questions he would there draw from him a description of the locality and the various objects passing before his mental vision; which were always true to life, though pertaining to places and things which the lad himself had never seen in his life.

At that time the new whaling grounds of the North Pacific were just opened by the daring enterprise of Roys, of Sag Harbor, and a few other venturous spirits. The Icy Sea,

or "Arctic," was the topic of discussion among all the whalemen we met; and the most fabulous tales were related by those who had made a season up north, of the abundance of monstrous polar whales, and the easy capture of them. "Hurrah for Behring's Strait!" was the universal cry, and our captain in the Occident did not escape the contagion.

We refitted at Cuam, in the Ladrone Group, and pointed her head north, laying a bee-line for the Polar Basin. But being early in the season, the icy barrier stopped our progress long before we gained the latitude of the straits. As no whales were to be met with, there was nothing for us to do but back and fill under easy canvas, waiting for the opening to push further north. Meanwhile, we were by no means alone in this disappointment, there being more or less vessels in sight at all times when the sky was clear enough to see them. Frequent visits were made between the different ships, and the night seldom arrived without bringing company for an evening "gam."

Among the sources of amusement on such occasions were the mate's experiments upon Abel Rowland, which, being a great novelty to nearly all the seamen of the fleet, were a subject of much wonder and comment. Most of the beholders were inclined to make light of the thing; and, though they did not understand it, dismissed it with a light laugh as "humbug."

But Captain Arthur of the Manchester became a full convert at the first exhibition, and afterwards lost no opportunity of visiting us, that he might see and hear more. He was led to experiment, with some little success, on board his own ship; but there was no one among the Manchester's crew as susceptible to the mysterious influence as the boy Abel.

Night after night Mr. Gibbon went through similar performances, the exhibition being more and more satisfactory, until it seemed the medium had been sent to all parts of the world with which either he himself or the operator was acquainted.

"Try him up in the 'Arctic.'" said Captain Arthur, one evening when the mate had announced that he was now in the most perfect clairvoyant state.

"But neither of us has ever been there."

"Never mind that. Try it; something new in the science may be discovered."

Mr. Gibbon took the limp hands of the lad in his own, and seemed to de engageb in an effort to infuse his own soul or spirit into that of the other; while we spectators, from both ships, crowded round them with breathless interest. For at such times the etiquette of discipline was much relaxed, and we were allowed to group in the forward cabin where we could both see and hear, while we were held strictly on our good behavior. It was apparent, from the satisfaction depicted in the mate's face, that he felt the assurance of success, and that he and the boy were quite *en rapport* with each other.

The excitement of suspense and of eager interest deepened, until it became an actual strain upon everyone present. Captain Arthur, in particular, seemed to look and listen with his whole body.

"What do you see now?"

"The shore, wild and barren—no trees—nothing green upon it."

"Is it high land?"

"Yes, quite high inland, but not near the water."

"What else do you see?"

"Great fields of white on the water that look like pieces of ice—all along the land—but there is clear water beyond it, between the white and the shore."

"Now look sharp in the clear water and tell us if you can see anything."

"Yes—I see—black bunches here and there, like arches, rising out of the water."

"Do you see any white puffs rise from these black arches?"

"Yes—I think I do—but I can hardly make them out; the glare of the ice seems to hide them from my eyes, but I can see something very faintly rising."

"Look sharp now, and tell what more you see."

"A boat—not like a whaleboat, either. There are men in her paddling. She is very near to one of the black bunches. *There goes flukes!*"

"Hurrah!" shouted Captain Arthur, unable to restrain his excitement any longer.

The silence up to this moment had been painful. The boy's answers had been given in very low tones, and between them one might have heard a pin drop anywhere in the after part of the ship. But when Abel saw the whale's flukes thrown up in air, he sang out lustily, as one might who had made any unexpected discovery.

There could be no longer a disbeliever in the revelations of psychology. The boy was

evidently, in spirit, among the wonderful scenes of the Polar Basin, with the whole grand panorama outspread before his mental vision.

"Now tell us," said Mr. Gibbon, "if there is anything else that strikes your eye. Any landmarks, or remarkable objects—so that you would know the place if you should see it again."

"Here is a bluff off here," pointing with his left hand, "that comes nearly down to the water, and there is a strange streak slantwise upon it, as if it had been cracked. Right in front of me now—but away inland—is a peak, much higher than any other land, but the whole upper part of it is so covered with snow that I did not at first make it out from the open sky. But now I can get the whole outline of it. *It looks awful!*"

The expression in the lad's face showed that he felt what he said. The sublimity of the sight impressed him powerfully. A pass or two of the mate's hand, and a strong effort of the will, took the spell off, and the medium was himself again, though at first tremulous and a little wild, like one recovering from the effects of chloroform, or some other anæsthetic.

Though the boy had never been "up north," and could, of course, know nothing of the appearance of the locality, or of the peculiar habits of the bowheads, or "steeple-top" whales, as they were called, his description tallied exactly with the accounts of those who had made a season to the Arctic. There were only two or three of these veterans present that evening, but they were, if anything, the firmest believers in the exhibition, and one of them even assured us he could recognize the locality from Abel's description.

He remembered nothing afterwards of what he had seen in this clairvoyant state; but, like a man who had been temporarily insane, all that had transpired in the interval was a blank to him. Nor was there anything especially valuable in the information thus obtained. But the whales he had seen had precisely the peculiar appearance of the bowheads, as we afterwards saw them ourselves, and the boat was beyond question an *oomiak*, such as is used by the Esquimaux of Behring's Strait. His landmarks and other points of description were found exactly correct.

Whales were found plenty, too, at the described locality; and for a week we had all the work we could attend to, and no time for psychological experiments. But a long period of fog succeeded; and when the sky again cleared, the whales were missing. They had shifted their ground; but in what direction to steer, who could tell? Twenty or more ships were in sight from the mast-head, but all, like ourselves, were idle.

That night the Manchester again closed with us, and Captain Arthur's boat was seen coming, even before his ship had rounded to.

"Come, Mr. Gibbon!" as soon as he jumped on our deck. "You must try your medium again and get a new departure."

"But how do you know we can learn anything from him?"

"Of course you can. You just *will* that he go where the whales are, and he can't do otherwise than find 'em. Then he can describe the landmarks again, and tell us just how the surroundings look."

There were several other boats coming to us; for the story of the lad's wonderful power's had got abroad among the fleet, and even the most skeptical in such matters were not insensible to the effects or the natural curiosity which is common to humanity.

Abel was ready, as indeed he always was, to be operated upon; and, seated in the centre of an eager crowd around the narrow cabin, was soon under the strange magnetic influence—a mere tool in the hands of his master. He described the look of the shore as being much the same as that where the ship was at that moment—but he could see an inlet or creek making up into the land, and by the side of it a native village, or rather encampment, of half a dozen huts; for these people drop their settlement temporarily wherever provisions are most conveniently obtained, and pull up stakes again at a few moments' notice, like the Bedouins of the desert. Here were whales in great numbers, close in shore, and the sea was nearly clear of ice—only a piece here and there. Away on his right, as he pointed his arm, was the snowy peak with the peculiar form; the same which was then in sight from the ships. The locality seen by him must be but a short distance from our position; evidently on the same coast—we being on the American side of the Polar Basin—and not many miles to the northward of our horizon limits.

"All right," was the satisfied remark from

several eager captains. "We can all be there to-morrow if we have any breeze."

Abel now began to imitate the action of plying a paddle, as if in hot pursuit of a whale, growing more and more excited. Eager eyes watched his every movement, as he continued to work his arms with increased vigor, with his eyes, or rather eyelids, for they were closed, fixed steadily on some object directly ahead of him—rising partially from his chair to give greater swing to the stroke of his imaginary paddle.

"Are you almost on?" inquired the mate, jokingly.

"Yes—a few more strokes—now, if he spouts twice more—*stand up*"——

He ceased his measured movement and stood, as in a tableau, holding the paddle in both hands. A strange paleness, as of fear, came over his countenance, the hands relaxed, as if dropping the paddle, and with a quick, sharp cry, he threw himself headlong forward to the floor.

Two or three hands caught at him in time to partially break his fall, or he would have been seriously hurt by dashing his face against the cabin deck. The spell was broken, and he rose to his feet trembling like a leaf, and with a cold perspiration standing upon his forehead.

After the first excitement of the moment was over, we all laughed at his strange conduct, which could only be attributed to fright; though but a moment before he had seemed eager enough to grapple with the whale, of which he imagined himself to be in pursuit. He had never in his life been "fast," not having been chosen in any boat's crew. There were enough stouter and better men for that service, and Abel had always been left as one of the "ship-keepers."

As on the former occasion, he could recall nothing of what he had done or seen while in the clairvoyant state. All was vacancy, from the time he yielded to the spell of the operator until he found himself erect and trembling in the grasp of two or three strong men, without the remotest idea how he came there.

The company soon after broke up, all the visitors seeking their respective ships, and the first slant of wind next morning was improved to the utmost in our eagerness to get to the northward. Our faith in the clairvoyant medium was not misplaced; for, after passing the next headland, we opened a view of the inlet of which Abel had told us, and the Esquimaux huts grouped near the bank. And before noon we were again among the polar whales, and our boats were down in chase.

One of Mr. Gibbon's crew being disabled by a lameness, he ordered his faithful medium into his boat, to pull his after-oar; and Abel seemed ready and eager to embrace this the first opportunity he had found of doing boat duty in chase of a whale. It was a beautiful day for our purpose; the sea nearly clear of ice, and the water almost as smooth and level as an inland pond. For, in the Polar Basin, where the average depth does not exceed twenty or thirty fathoms, there is no long ocean swell, and at times the surface is a piece of glass; though when the wind blows hard, it raises a short chopping sea, which is especially unpleasant and dangerous.

The chance fell in favor of the mate's boat, and as it neared the whale—a vicious-looking bull, of medium size—and it became evident that it would soon be within dart, we, in the other boats suspended our labors, and lay, watching the onset, though ready to grasp our oars as soon as the word "Fast!" should be given. I looked at Abel Rowland, with his eyes fixed upon the monster, half risen from his thwart to ply his paddle, just as I had seen him the night before, and wondered at the lad's courage, which I thought remarkable for a novice. I heard the order, "Stand up!" given in low but clear tones, and Joaquin, the Portuguese boatsteerer, reared his tall form in the head of the boat, spit in his hands, as he invariably did on such occasions, and took up his first iron with deliberate coolness.

"He'll have a *splendid* chance!" said the second mate, with smothered excitement. "Be all ready, boys, to pull ahead!"

Nearer and nearer—Joaquin drew back his long harpoon for a dart—I heard the word, "Give it to him!" saw the weapon flash to its mark—and all forward of the midship thwart was "white water." But Abel Rowland dropped the paddle—just as I had seen him do in the clairvoyant state—and flung himself, face downward, overboard. We, the boat's crew all saw it,—the tragedy, of which his acts on the previous night appeared to be but a rehearsal. The next moment we bent lustily to our oars, not to attack the whale, but to save the struggling crew from the wreck of the boat.

Her whole broadside had been crushed by

a swing of the whale's flukes; but Mr. Gibbon had succeeded in cutting the line, and the whale had disappeared. Four shivering men were assisted into our boat; but neither the boy Abel nor the tall Portuguese Joaquin was ever seen again. The boy, we thought, was not injured, but was so paralyzed with fright, that he sunk just as he fell on the water. The exact manner of Joaquin's death could be only a matter of conjecture; but as he was a man of cool courage and resources, and a good swimmer, it is probable that he was sturck heavily and stunned. The three oarsmen who sat between the two lost men all escaped without injury.

I have often heard and read of people having a premonition of death in dreams. I am no spiritualist, or believer in presentiments: but I shall always maintain that Abel Rowland saw a vision of the whole terrible tragedy that befell him and his shipmate, though he could remember nothing of it when in his normal state; and that he had, in fact, rehearsed the scene of his own death the night before it happened.

IN SUMMER.

IN summer, when the days were long,
We walked together in the wood;
Our heart was light, our step was strong,
Sweet flutterings were in our blood,
In summer, when the days were long.

We strayed from morn till evening came;
We gathered flowers, and wove us crowns;
We walked 'mid poppies red as flame,
Or sat upon the yellow downs;
And always wished our life the same.

In summer, when the days were long,
We leaped the hedge-row, crossed the brook
And still her voice flowed forth in song,
Or else she read some graceful book,
In summer, when the days were long.

We loved, and yet we knew it not,—
For loving seemed like breathing then;
We found a heaven in every spot;
Saw angels, too, in all good men,
And dreamed of God in grove and grot.

In summer, when the days are long,
Alone I wander, muse alone.
I see her not; but that old song
Under the fragrant wind is blown,
In summer, when the days are long.

Alone I wander in the wood;
But one fair spirit hears my sighs;
And half I see, so glad and good,
The honest daylight of her eyes,
That charmed me under earlier skies.

In summer, when the days are long,
I love her as we loved of old.
My heart is light, my step is strong;
For love brings back those hours of gold,
In summer, when the days are long.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS' STORY-TELLER.

THE CHIMNEY ELVES.

BY LOUISE DUPEE.

"THERE, now my porridge is smoking again!" roared the giant, overturning the great bowl in his wrath, and letting the porridge stream over the floor, like a cream-colored river spotted with plums. "Didn't I tell you what would happen to you, if I had cinders for my supper again?" And he rushed towards the trembling servants, brandishing his enormous spoon in a manner that was dreadful to see, for it was so massive and heavy that a single blow from it might have killed one.

Barbean, who stood nearest his infuriated master, thought that his last hour had come, and it would have been his last, doubtless, had not a whole troop of chimney elves suddenly emerged from the fireplace and blinded the giant's eyes with the great cloud of smoke which they fanned into his face with their wonderful little wings. Then the servants took to their heels, leaving their master to cool his smarting eyes as best he might; and by the time they were quite cool and clear, his anger had cooled also, and he quite forget the porridge for a time.

"Barbean," said he, "where did all the smoke come from? Is there anything the matter with the chimney?"

But there was no reply, and he saw that he was alone in the room, and his feet were still in the river of porridge.

"Barbean! Bobinette! Margot!" he called, at the top of his lungs.

Knowing that by this time he was no longer dangerous, they came out of their hiding-places, and awaited their master's orders.

"Wipe up that porridge, Bobinette, and you Barbean, put on the pot again, and see if you can keep a fire that will cook the porridge as it should be cooked this time. Margot, you can watch the pot, and see that no cinders fly into it. It seems as if the chimney is bewitched since it has been made over, and where the cinders come from I can't tell. It ought to be as clean as a new chimney, if the bricks are old. I'll have it seen to, and if it isn't built right, the workmen who built it shall be hanged!" And he brought his great fist down upon the table with a force that made the dishes rattle on their shelves, and the window shake as if an earthquake were tumbling the castle.

Just as everything was subsiding to quiet again, and Barbean had recovered the use of his senses in a sufficient degree to be able to put on the pot, a peal of merry mocking laughter rang in the giant's ears. He grew fairly purple with rage again, and though he could not see which one of the servants had the audacity to mock him in that way—and of course it must have been one of them, as there was none else in the room—he turned upon poor Bobinette, who was just behind him, trying to dip up the porridge with a great tin dipper. She was his favorite, and as a general thing he was wont to spare her, and heap the weight of his abuses on the unlucky shoulders of Barbean and Margot; for Bobinette was a pretty little maid, red-cheeked, bright-eyed and sunny-haired, and even the grim old giant was not insensible to her beauty, and thought that she was like a dewy pink rose, in the cobwebbed old castle. But he was in such a passion now that he would have killed her, had not the chimney elves appeared with their smoke again, as they should have done, for the laughter which infuriated the giant so gurgled from their own saucy little throats. This time the smoke was not so easy to get rid of. The great kitchen grew suddenly as dark as midnight with it, and the cinders were flying about like swarms of merry black bees. But the thickest of it was in the giant's eyes, and it puffed from his long grizzly beard as if a nest of elfins were boiling their teakettle somewhere in its depths.

He had lifted Bobinette by her long silken curls, and the next moment would probably have crushed her to death in his great hands. But when the smoke came he dropped her at once, and down she fell into Barbean's arms quite unharmed save for the pain in her head caused by being held up by her hair. She was only too happy to escape in this way, and Barbean, who had long adored

the little maid in secret, clasped her thankfully in his arms, and made his way out into the daylight. He was a valiant fellow, and though but a mouse in size and strength, compared to the giant, was just about to make an attack on him with the iron frying-pan, to force him to release Bobinette, when the friendly smoke came to his assistance.

The giant's eyes were so full of ashes that he was quite blind for a time, and went tumbling about in great fury to find the door, which Barbean had taken particular pains to close after him when he went out. He stamped on the floor with his great feet till all the neighborhood echoed with a terrible hollow sound, like thunder, and all the time he was raving about the chimney, and declaring that the workmen who built it should die on the morrow.

"Why didn't you let the old chimney be? *That* never smoked, did it?" said the same funny little piping voice that had just mocked him with its laughter.

But though the giant struck from right to left with his huge fists, and gave utterance to such threats as would make one's teeth chatter with fright, he only pounded the wall, and his threats were vain enough, as there was nobody to hear them; nobody who cared for them, at least. The little chimney elves greeted him with peal after peal of laughter. The more he raved, the more they laughed, and the smoke kept puffing out anew every moment.

The chimney elves were good-hearted little things, but they hated the giant, as well they might, for he was a monster of wickedness, and the terror of all the people round about. If he entertained the least spite against a man, he would as soon kill him as he would a spider; and he was always doing mischief to somebody. He was so enraged because the garden of a poor farmer looked finer than his own, that he destroyed it utterly, by tramping on it with his great feet. He caused the miller to be put to death, because he didn't grind his meal fine enough, and cut off the head of a poor woodcutter because he felled the wrong tree by mistake. Though there was no end to the gold he had hoarded up in his castle, he robbed the poorest of his neighbors, and was so miserly and mean that he would hardly allow himself enough to eat, and almost starved his servants. Then, the chimney elves had a personal grudge against him. He had caused the old chimney where they had taken up their abode for years, to be torn down because it was too wide and large, and consequently it took a generous pile of fuel to make anything like a good fire in its sooty old mouth. They were very angry when their cosey nest was disturbed; and still more angry to see what a mean narrow little chimney the giant put up in its place. It was a good large-hearted giant who built the castle, you see, and the elves came in his day, a hundred years before. They had plenty of room then for all their cunning little household arrangements—room enough for their swarms of wee funny black babies to roll and frolic in; room enough to hold merry-makings and give tea-drinkings to their neighbor elves; room enough to live as genteel, respectable elfins should. But now they were so cramped as to be uncomfortabe in their narrow lodgings, for their family had grown larger and larger, as a matter of course. The babies tumbled together in such a tangle, that it was difficult to tell which was which; there was scarcely space enough to turn round in their largest apartment, and many a disconsolate elf was obliged to sleep with her little head sticking out of the chimney-top, because there was such a crowd of heads within. So every day they declared that they would be revenged on the mean old giant, and every day they *did* play some sly little trick upon him; and many a time before to-day had saved the life of the servants, though they had no idea of it.

The giant began to think that the castle was bewitched, such strange things happened to him. If he got into a rage at some misdemeanor of Barbean, or Bobinette, or Margot, and was about to lay his hands upon him, or her, some unseen thing would trip him, till he fell flat on his nose, or he would feel sharp little needles pricking his flesh all over from head to foot, until he would roar with pain, and forget everything else.

The poor servants were afraid of their lives all the time, and would have left the giant's service if they had had the courage. But they dared not even mention that they had the slightest wish to do so, it would have made their master so angry, and if they had tried to run away from him he would surely have searched them out, and caused them to be put to death instantly. So, though they were very unhappy, they made the best of their unfortunate situation, and served their terrible tyrant as faithfully as if

he had been worthy and just. The elves approved highly of their conduct, and through them, as you will see, everything came out right at last.

"Alas!" said poor Bobinette, wringing her hands, "he's threatening the workmen who built the chimney. My poor father! he will surely be killed to-morrow! What shall I do?"

"And our poor brother, he helped build the chimney, too!" said Barbean and Margot, who were brother and sister.

They had crept into an old rubbish closet, in an obscure corner of the castle, but the dreadful voice of the giant might have been heard nearly a mile away, and what he was saying came to their ears very distinctly.

"Can nothing be done to save them?" sobbed Bobinette, with an appealing glance at Barbean.

Barbean was about to make some reply, when a queer little piping voice close at the keyhole, said:—

"Come out now, and all will be right. The giant himself is the only one in danger."

It was a little chimney elf who spoke these cheering words, but the listeners had no idea whence the voice came. Barbean opened the door, but there was no one to be seen, and no footfall sounded in the empty corridor. Still they obeyed the command, and came out of their hiding-place pale and trembling. Just then the giant called them, and they ventured into his presence. He had grown much calmer, and was intent on supper once more.

"Spread the table, Bobinette," said he. "We won't try to have any porridge to-night; I can sup off a cold joint."

Then he began to rave about the masons who built the chimney, again threatening to kill them before another night fell. But the smoke had cleared away, the fire blazed serenely on the hearth, and nothing happened to hinder the preparations for supper this time. The giant ate his cold joint with a very ill grace, however, and between every mouthful he muttered a curse. It was quite dark when he had finished, and then, after he had smoked his pipe for a few moments, being nearly worn out by his prolonged fits of passion, he went striding off to bed.

"Remember," said he, as he closed the door after him, "I want my breakfast early to-morrow morning. I have business to attend to." And he gave utterance to a low, meaning chuckle, which filled the hearts of the poor servants with horror.

When he had gone they huddled themselves together round the fireside, and whispered their fears and their sorrows to each other. They dared not speak aloud until they were assured by the giant's loud snoring that he was fast asleep, for his ears were so sharp and great that he could hear what one said if one spoke distinctly and in an ordinarily loud tone, from one end of the great castle to the other. When he did sleep, he slept so lightly that the slighest unusual noise awakened him, for he was always fearful of danger to himself. He knew that everybody hated him so that his life was in danger if he were off his guard one moment, and every night he slept with a great sword in his hand.

"Where do you suppose the voice that we heard in the closet came from—and could it have spoken truly when it said that no one but the giant was in danger?" said Margot, a ray of hope shining through her despair.

"It came from here," suddenly piped the same little voice, close beside them.

They looked up with startled eyes, and beheld the funniest little being imaginable, pointing down into her throat with a tiny black finger. She was as black as black could be, from the crown of her little head to the sole of her little foot. Her crisp curly locks were full of cinders, and when she moved smoke floated from her garments. She wasn't as large as a blackbird, but was shaped as daintily as any little lady in the land, with her trim little waist and bare sooty neck and arms. The trio in the chimney corner could do nothing but stare at her with open-eyed wonder, for they never had seen the like before. She seemed to be in high spirits, and danced gayly about the hearthstone and almost into the fire on her tiny black heels, and her skirts flapped into the blaze more than once; but they did not take fire, though Bobinette cried out for fear they would do so. She laughed right merrily then, and let them remain in the flames a long time, but they did not even scorch. Then, when she danced, her nimble little feet would sometimes be half buried in the hot coals, but the little black face was as serene and composed as ever, and she seemed to enjoy the heat. Bobinette could hardly believe they were real feet, that glanced in and out from under those little fire-proof petticoats.

"You wonder if what I told you a short time ago is true," said she, at length, with a merry laugh. "Wait a little while, and you will see." Then making a low bow to Barbean, with one tiny black hand placed upon her heart, she added, "I shall greet you as lord of the castle to-morrow morning." Then she whisked away up the chimney.

Barbean looked at Bobinette, and Margot looked at Barbean, but they were all too much amazed to speak. Barbean was the first to recover himself, and expressed his belief that the little being who had made such a startling assertion was no other than a chimney elf—perhaps the queen of the chimney elves. And who knew but what her people would take some measures to put the wicked old giant to death? The whole race of elves were powerful; even among chimney elves, there were some who carried magic wands.

"And elves are true," said Bobinette, her eyes sparkling with the light of hope. "What could she have meant by saying that she should greet you as the lord of the castle to-morrow morning?"

The servants were so excited, and in such a state of suspense, that they could not think of sleeping that night, so they all three sat up around the fire until the cock began to say that it was near daylight. All was still in the castle; even the mice, who held entertainments every night on the rafters over the great bare kitchen, were silent, and pussy-cat, who usually gave rather lively concerts with a few friends in the backyard, remained within doors and blinked serenely at the fire. The giant, who usually snored without cessation until morning, waking every echo in the great empty old building, grew silent at about one o'clock, and snored no more. The servants thought that he must be awake, and were afraid to stir in their chairs for fear that he would discover that they were up at that time of the night, and be very angry. The door of his room opened out of the kitchen, and the slightest noise made there was always sure to reach his ears. Bobinette, swinging her nervous little foot, knocked over the poker, which caused the greatest consternation among the group. Bobinette's face grew as white as her apron, and in her terror she could almost feel her master's terrible grasp upon her. But still there was no sound from his room, and the wrath that they feared so much did not break over their poor heads.

The still night wore away, and it was a joy, though it was a dread morning, to see a little hint of dawn in the sky. The giant was an early riser, and in less than an hour he would ring his great bell to arouse the household, and Barbean, and Bobinette, and Margot were just about to steal away upstairs, so that he would never know of their vigil, when a chorus of funny little chuckling laughs, and a great rustling and tumbling up in the chimney, attracted their attention. Bobinette dropped her candle, she was so startled, and they all strained their eyes to look up in the mouth of the chimney.

"More chimney elves," said Barbean.

There were more chimney elves, indeed. Down they came in a troop, some in cap and gown, some in jacket and breeches; sooty, bright-eyed, funny little beings, that swarmed about the great kitchen like a numberless flock of blackbirds. Some carried wands in their grimy little hands, and two or three valiant looking little fellows wore terrible swords about the size of a darning-needle at their sides. They kept coming down the chimney, until there was scarcely a breathing place left in the room, the last dozen or so in a procession, dragging after them, with a great deal of puffing and panting, a bunch of keys, which looked strangely like those which the giant always wore hanging to his belt in the daytime, and kept under his pillow at night, keys to the private rooms of the castle, where he kept his treasures of gold, and silver, and jewels.

Bobinette and Margot were frightened at the strange state of things, and hid their heads in their aprons; but Barbean looked at the little people with amazement, as well as wonder. He thought of his terrible master, the giant, and feared for their safety, though he knew that their race were all pretty well able to take care of themselves. But it seemed as if such a great fellow as the giant would be able to blow them away with his breath, like so many feathers, and with one of his great feet he might crush a dozen of them to jelly.

"What if he should take them unawares?" Barbean thought.

So he gave them a little hint of warning, in a very guarded and respectful way, for he stood in awe of the tiny people.

"The master of the castle, as you probably all know, is a giant," said he, in a whisper, "and is very cruel. If he should find you here, he would be sure to do you harm

if he could, and if you are not very quiet, you will surely awaken him."

But they only laughed when he spoke of the possibility of the giant's doing them harm.

"You are very kind, sir," said the same funny little creature who had appeared to them before, and who seemed to be the queen of the chimney elves, "but I apprehend no incivility from the master of the castle. I have a great regard for him, and so have all my people."

"Give the new master greeting, and deliver the keys to him," she said, then, waving her little wand towards the crowd.

To Barbean's astonishment, they all made obeisance to him, and placed the keys at his feet.

"Now greet the pretty maid who is to be its mistress," said she; and they all bobbed funny little bows to Bobinette, who had ceased to be afraid, and was delighted with the wee people.

"Now greet the sister of the master, and wish them all health and long life."

They did so, with a will, and their little piping voices ringing together were like the chorus of a troop of blackbirds on a summer's morning.

Barbean was too much amazed to make any reply to the greeting. He was beginning to believe, with the giant, that the castle was bewitched, and he had lost his senses.

The little queen, noticing this, said:—

"The old master is dead; he was too wicked and cruel to be allowed to live, and who should be the master now, if not you, since the keys are in your possession? No one has the power to take them away from you, excepting myself, and provided you build a new chimney as large and roomy as the old one for our accommodation, I shall never do so."

Barbean promised that he would erect a spacious chimney, but he could hardly believe that the giant was dead, until the little queen opened the door of his room, and they all peeped in where he lay on the bed, grim and rigid, with his ugly features all swollen and distorted. The chimney elves had suffocated him with smoke, but how the sly little things managed to do so was a mystery. Barbean, Bobinette and Margot raised a shout of thanksgiving with one accord, and the elves joined in, with all their might.

The joyful news of the giant's death was soon spread throughout the village, and all the people rejoiced and rang the bells, and no one seemed disposed to dispute Barbean's right to be master of the castle. It was indeed a happy day to them all, for they were not only rid of the cruel tyrant who had been their fear and torment so long, but as nearly all the inhabitants of the little hamlet were relations of Barbean, they became rich through him, for he was as generous as the giant had been hoarding, and the wealth that he found in the giant's storerooms was untold.

Barbean and Bobinette were married that very day, and a whole week of holidays followed, during which the people did nothing but feast and rejoice.

Such a chimney as Barbean caused to be built in the place of the old one was a wonder to be seen! It was so wide, and high, and roomy, all the elves in Christendom might have taken up their abode in it. After it was finished, the elves, who had moved to another chimney until their home should be ready for them, came back in high glee, and the little queen appeared on the hearth one night and expressed herself as being much gratified with the state of things. She assured Barbean that she should always be his friend, and if it were ever in her power to do him a good turn, she would do so. After that, Barbean and Bobinette saw nothing more of the chimney elves in the castle, though they stayed until they died, and their children lived there after them. But sometimes, on still nights, when the fire was too low to crackle much, they would hear them crooning softly to their sooty wee babies, as they rocked them to sleep. The elves were evidently very happy, and so were the people in the castle. Barbean, Bobinette and Margot enjoyed their wealth themselves, because they shared it so freely with others, and everybody mourned for them when they died.

ORANGE CREAM.—Orange cream represents a delicacy concocted with the juice of six oranges, one-fourth of a pound of white sugar, one pint of boiling water and six eggs; beat the yolks, add sugar, orange juice and water, and stir over the fire until it thickens; when cool put into glasses, and on each one put the beaten whites sweetened and flavored with a little of the rind.

STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE.—Nice strawberry shortcake is made with sour milk as follows: To two teacupfuls of sour milk add a teaspoonful of soda, then three-fourths of a teacupful of butter or lard, partly melted, and enough flour to make a soft dough; roll it into thin cakes large enough to fill the pan in which they are baked; when they are baked split them and butter them while hot; lay half of the cake on a plate, spread with strawberries and sprinkle with sugar; then put on the other half, then more strawberries, and so on.

A DELICIOUS COLD DESSERT.—Strawberries, raspberries or blackberries may be used for the following tempting dish: Soak half a package of gelatine for two hours in a half-cupful of water; mash a quart of strawberries, and add half a cupful of sugar to them; boil half a cupful of sugar gently with a cupful of water for twenty minutes; rub the berries through a sieve; add the gelatine to the boiling sirup and take from the fire immediately, then add the berries; set the whole in a pan of ice water and beat five minutes; add the whites of four eggs, and beat till the mixture begins to thicken; put into molds and set away to harden; serve with cream and sugar.

SAUCE FOR SALMON.—One cupful of milk heated to a boil and thickened with a tablespoonful of cornstarch mixed in cold water, two cupfuls of the liquor in which the salmon was cooked, one tablespoonful of butter, one raw egg well beaten, juice of one-half a lemon, mace and a little cayenne; add the egg to the thickened milk, after stirring in the butter and liquor; remove from the fire; add seasoning, and let stand in hot water five minutes, covered; add lemon juice last and turn out immediately, pouring it all over and around the salmon.

LUNCH DISH.—Brown to a crisp in the oven some slices of bread, and then roll in crumbs; thoroughly butter a baking dish; sprinkle with crumbs; then put in oysters that have been slightly cooked in milk, thickened, and seasoned with salt, pepper and butter; then add a layer of macaroni that has been cooked twenty minutes; sprinkle crumbs on top and bits of butter also, and brown quickly in a hot oven.

DEVILLED LOBSTER.—Remove the meat from the tail and claws of the lobster, and chop it very fine; season with mustard, cayenne, a little curry powder and salt; mix well; put in a saucepan a tablespoonful of butter and a tablespoonful of vinegar, and add the meat and a little hot water; let it boil up once and serve with hard boiled eggs and lettuce.

SPINACH WITH EGG.—Boil spinach in plenty of hot water, salted, for twenty minutes; drain and press out all the water, chop fine, and put back over the fire, with a large spoonful of butter, salt and pepper to suit taste, a little sugar, allowing one teaspoonful to a peck of spinach; stir until thoroughly heated; then remove to a hot deep dish and cover with a dressing made of the yolks of four hard-boiled eggs rubbed smooth, with a teaspoonful of melted butter, a teaspoonful of cream, and the last thing a teaspoonful of lemon juice; spread the dressing over the top of the spinach, and garnish the edges with a border of the sliced whites of the eggs.

SHORT CAKE.—One pint of sifted flour, one-half teaspoonful of salt, one full teaspoonful of baking powder, one-fourth of a cupful of butter, one cupful of milk or cold water; mix the salt and baking powder with the flour, sifting several times; then rub in the butter until fine like meal, or, if preferred, very short and crisp; melt the butter and add it with the milk; add the liquid gradually, mixing and cutting with a knife, and using only enough to make it of a light, spongy consistency; scrape out the dough onto a well-floured board; toss it with a knife until well floured; divide into two parts; put each part into a flat cake and roll gently until about one-half an inch thick and the size of a pie plate; place one on top of the other and bake; when done, tear apart, and spread each half with butter and fruit of any kind sweetened to taste; if strawberries are used add cream with the sugar; peaches or oranges sliced are delicious, also chopped pineapple and stewed apples can be used; serve warm.

GRAHAM PUDDING.—Two cupfuls of Graham, one-half a teaspoonful of salt, one-half teaspoonful of soda, one-half a cupful of milk, one-half a cupful of molasses, one cupful of stoned raisins floured; steam two and one-half hours; serve with cream sauce.

HOME TOPICS.

Old and New Uses for Ammonia.

Liquid ammonia is one of the most useful preparations for lightening the labor of housekeeping as well as a simple remedy for many common physical ailments.

A few drops in a glass of water will at once relieve an acid stomach and break up headache. A cloth wet with a weak solution, tied around the forehead, is also beneficial.

It affords speedy relief in mosquito or spider bites or stings of bees.

A few spoonfuls added to the water of the bath is very invigorating, and even a little added to the water for washing the hands and face is very agreeable and refreshing.

There is nothing so strengthening and cleansing for the hair as an occasional washing in one part liquid ammonia, two parts alcohol and four parts water, washing off the hair in clear water afterwards. Strong ammonia water will also remove the oily deposits from hair brushes, and, when well rinsed and dried in the sun, with the bristles down, will be found as "good as new."

In the laundry there is nothing so harmless and helpful as ammonia. A few spoonfuls in the washing-water make the labor light and the clothes white, and there is no danger of injury to the fabrics, as in the use of soda, lime or javelle water. A very superior and simple washing fluid is made of equal parts of ammonia and spirits of turpentine. It makes rubbing almost unnecessary, while it whitens the clothes without injury. A few spoonfuls should be added to the clothes in boiling as well as in washing.

Gold jewelry washed in ammonia water, with a brush to reach the corners and crevices, will look equal to new. A little when added to the water for house plants makes them healthy and flourishing, while a liberal use of it keeps the kitchen utensils in a sweet condition, removes grease and all unpleasant odors. For cleaning paint use a flannel cloth, two spoonfuls of ammonia to three quarts of water, and no soap will be needed. Sponge off windows and mirrors with ammonia water and polish with a soft newspaper. Used nearly clear it will remove grease spots from carpets or any fabric.

The Value of Onions.

The free use of onions for the table has always been considered by most people a healthy and desirable vegetable, and but for their odor, which is objectionable to many, they would be found generally on our dinner tables.

For cold on the chest there is no better specific, for most persons, than well boiled or roasted onions. They may not agree with every one, but to persons of good digestion they will not only be found to be a most excellent remedy for a cough, and clogging of the bronchial tubes, which is usually the cause of a cough, but if eaten freely at the outset of a cold they will usually break up what promised, by the severity of the attack, to have been a serious one.

A writer in one of our medical journals recently recommended the giving of small raw onions to children three or four times a week, and when they get too large and strong to be eaten raw, then boil and roast them.

Another writer advocating their use says: "During unhealthy seasons when diphtheria and like contagious diseases prevail, onions ought to be eaten in the spring of the year at least once a week. Onions are invigorating prophylatic beyond description. Further, I challenge the medical fraternity or any mother to point out a place where children have died from diphtheria or scarlatina anginosa, etc., where onions were freely used.—*Scientific American.*

Drink that is Healthful.

Use by the public for 100 years, with ever-widening popularity, ought to be sufficient proof of the excellence of an article of food. Such is the testimonial submitted to the good sense of housekeepers by the proprietors of Walter Baker & Co.'s cocoa. Of the legion who cannot drink tea or coffee steadily without deleterious effects, probably nearly all have tried this article, and thousands have from choice substituted it permanently at the table for the less nutritious drinks. It is a healthful, refreshing and delicious beverage. Its vastly increased consumption has enabled its proprietors to place it upon the market at a lower price than ever before, while guaranteeing that its established reputation for absolute purity shall remain unimpaired.

Cure for a Sty.—When you feel that pricking pain and see that fatal little spot of red on the eyelid that surely foretells the coming of a sty, have no fears for the result, but put in a small bag a teaspoonful of black tea, on which pour enough boiling water to make sufficiently moist; as soon as cool enough put it on the eye and let it remain till morning. According to *Harper's Bazaar* the sty will in all probability be gone; if not, one more application will be certain to remove it.

Those about to purchase a new tooth brush would do well to try the *Ideal Felt Tooth Polisher.* It is made of felt (the brush part) fitting nicely into a handle. The face of this compact felt is covered to conform to the curve of the gums, and cleanses the teeth more perfectly than the ordinary tooth brush.

CURIOUS AND OTHER MATTERS.

NOTABLE.

First jury 970.
Pins made 1450.
Needles made 1545.
Matches made 1829.
First cast iron 1544.
First newspaper 1494.
Coal used as fuel 1834.
Surnames used in 1162.
Lead pencils used 1594.
Window-glass used 694.
First gold coin B. C. 206.
Tobacco introduced 1583.
First steam railroad 1830.
First postage stamps 1840.
Kerosene introduced 1826.
Electric light invented 1874.
Iron found in America 1815.
First insurance, marine, 533.
First wheeled carriages 1559.
First American express 1821.
Musical notes introduced 1338.
Latin ceased to be spoken 580.
Bible translated into Saxon 637.
Gunpowder used by Chinese 80.
First illuminating gas in 1792.
Bible translated into Gothic 872.
Photographs first produced 1802.
Old Testament finished B. C. 430.
Emancipation proclamation 1863.
Paper made by Chinese B. C. 220.
Bible translated into English 1534.

HATRED OF THE PECCARY.—"I haven't the least idea in the world that you ever hunted a peccary, did you?" asked a sportsman, who affects large and unusual game, of a *New York Mail* reporter. "Of course you didn't, and unless you have a cartload of nerve and ammunition enough to stock a small garrison, I wouldn't advise you to. The peccary, as you doubtless know, is a little animal somewhat on the wild hog order, and he roams pretty much where he pleases in southern Texas and abutting regions. There was a time when nothing would kill a peccary but arrows inoculated with a deadly poison distilled by the Indians, but that was before the days of Winchester rifles. A bullet from a Winchester is just searching enough to find a peccary's vitals, but the range doesn't want to be too long. When a man goes out hunting peccaries he doesn't trip lightly through the forest, and, stealing upon the unsuspecting game, bring it down with his unerring rifle. No; not when he hunts peccaries. If he did, nineteen seconds after he fired his first shot he would be apportioned out among the drove in two-ounce lots, buttons, boots and baggage counted in. The daring peccary hunter shins up a tall tree near where the charming creatures will more than likely soon come to feed on acorns or mast. The peccary has but one virtue: he can't climb a tree. Perched safely upon a limb, the brave huntsman waits for the peccaries' coming, and when the drove comes trotting and grunting along beneath him he sends a bullet through a peccary's heart. The wounded peccary lies down at once. He knows just what's the matter. He turns his glittering bead of an eye up to the hunter and dies without uttering a sound. One peccary killed out of a drove, the hunter must have ammunition enough to kill all the rest, or provisions enough to last him a year, for the survivors at once take positions around the foot of the tree, and there they sit on their haunches, now and then gnawing furiously at the trunk of the tree, waiting for the hunter to come down. If hate, in the fullest sense of the word, can be expressed by looks and actions, then the peccary can look and act it toward a human being who has done it an injury. The peccaries are natural Knights of Labor, for their motto is, 'An injury to one is the concern of all.' They never let up when they set out to avenge an injury. When they surround a tree in which they have discovered a hunter or other enemy, they never leave it. Some of the drove are always on the watch, the animals going away in detachments to feed, and relieving guard regularly. The hunter shoots one after another of the waiting and watching drove, and each one, as it receives its death wound, lies down without a murmur and dies, never removing its eyes from its slayer. The living pay no attention to the dead or dying, but sit there on their haunches hoping for revenge until the last one dies. As a drove of peccaries will in ten seconds tear a grizzly bear into such minute fragments that you can hardly find a piece of his bone two inches long after the ceremony is over, you can imagine what show a hunter would have in meeting with a group of them. Under the circumstances, peccary hunting is not a popular sport with people who know them; although, if you don't disturb a peccary, you can pass close by a hundred of them and they won't notice you."

THE DEAREST BOOK IN THE WORLD.—What was the highest price ever given for any book? We may venture to say that we know of one for which the sum of 250,000 francs ($50,000) was paid by its present owner, the German Government. That book is a missal, formerly given by Pope Leo X. to King Henry VIII. of England, along with a parchment conferring on that sovereign the right of assuming the title of "De-

fender of the Faith," borne ever since by English kings. Charles II. made a present of the missal to the ancestor of the famous Duke of Hamilton, whose extensive and valuable library was sold some years ago by Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, of London. The book which secured the highest offer was a Hebrew Bible, in the possession of the Vatican. In 1512 the Jews of Venice proposed to Pope Julius II. to buy the Bible, and to pay for it its weight in gold. It was so heavy that it required two men to carry it. Indeed, it weighed 325 pounds, thus representing the value of half a million of francs ($400,000). Though being much pressed for money, in order to keep up the "Holy League" against King Louis XII. of France, Julius II. declined to part with the volume.

A HONEYCOMB IN A TREE FOR FIFTY YEARS.—A remarkable discovery has just been made at the Cathays Yard of the Taff Vale Railway Company. A large elm tree, grown in Gloucestershire, was being cut up into timber, when, right in the very heart, a cavity measuring eight feet by seven and one-half inches in diameter was discovered almost completely filled with the comb of the honey-bee, together with a squirrel's skull. No means of access to the hollow was discoverable, neither was decay anywhere apparent, and around the cavity itself no less than fifty "rings," each ring denoting a year's growth, were counted, the outer bark being too without a flaw. The hollow was of uniform size throughout, and presented the appearance of having been bored with an auger, and great though its dimensions, it was practically filled with the comb, proving that the bees must have been in possession for several years. Empty combs of the queen also showed that they had swarmed. How the bees got there can only be guessed, but it is surmised that a squirrel once occupied a decayed hole in the tree, cleared away the decay, occupied the cavity as its home, and there died. Then the bees entered into possession and filled the whole with comb, when by some means the entrance, which must have been small, became stopped, the large quantity of grub and fly being taken as demonstrative that the nest was not voluntarily deserted. Then for fifty years the growth of the timber went on. The entrance being obliterated and the hole hermetically sealed, the comb was preserved from decay for half a century, to be found at last in the way described.

DUST-STORM.—What is described as a "proper dust-storm" recently passed over Pekin. The morning opened with a thick fog, damp and raw, and a slight air of wind from the east. In the forenoon the sun partially broke through and showed a strong current from the west in the higher regions of the atmosphere. Then a deep yellow haze obscured the sun for some hours, reminding one of the characteristic London fog. The air was quite still. In the afternoon, sudden as a shot from a gun, a gale broke out of the west and blew hard till after sunset, when it lulled, but broke out afresh during the night and continued for some hours more. The morning light revealed a coating of fine yellow dust over everything. This dust comes from great distances, and is carried along in a dense cloud at very high altitudes.

FAKIRS' TRICKS.—Describing a few of the games practised by the ingenious "fakir," the *Philadelphia News* says: The "holding out" trick is a neat one and seldom fails. The short change man has several ways to work, but "holding out" silver and "stripping" a pile of notes are the favorite methods. He may be a candy butcher, an outside ticket seller, or even a peanut stand keeper. If a man whom he thinks he can work it on approaches, the short change man will perhaps quietly ask if he has not a large bill, as he is anxious to get rid of some small notes or silver. The big note is produced, and if silver is to be "held out," the fakir counts the change correctly in his own hands in full view of the intended victim. Then taking all the money in one hand, he pretends to drop it into the hands of his customer. He manages to "palm" two or three dollars.

"Stripping" notes is done by first counting them before the victim, allowing him to be sure that it is straight, and then to re-count them, turning the ends of the notes over one by one. After three or four have been turned, the crook "strips" them with the fingers of his left hand into the palm, and carefully rolling up the remainder, tells the man to put it away where no one can get at it. Sometimes the short-change man counts at both ends, thus:—

"Fifty for the ticket and 50 is $1, $2, $4.50, and the 50 you have. Thank you."

The "top and bottom" worker sells boxes or packages of some kind that may be opened at the end. He has a corner of a banknote placed just so that it can be seen. He takes a $10 bill, folds it up in full view of the open-mouthed greeny, and pretends to put it under the lid of the package. But he doesn't. He palms the bill, and exposes the corner of a small bill, or perhaps the corner of a note torn off for the purpose, and asks:—

"What'll you give for it?"

He is pretty sure to get an offer, and never refuses to sell.

RUTHVEN'S PUZZLE PAGE.

Send all communications for this Department to EDWIN R. BRIGGS, West Bethel, Oxford County, Maine.

Answers to June Puzzles.

101.—Burbot.

102.—Crow-d-y.

103.—Chum-p.

104.—Raze-e.

105.—Legato-r.

106.—
P
A H A
C L A S S
A L Y S S U M
P H A S E O L U S
A S S O I L S
S U L L Y
M U S
S

107.—
D A P
C R U E T
D R O S E R A
A U S T R A L
P E E R E S S
T R A S H
A L S

108.—C-amber.

109.—C-ensure.

110.—T-erse.

111.—R-evert.

112.—F-inch.

113.—P-lanner.

114.—Elumosynary.

115.—
S
C U B
C A M E L
S U M P T E R
B E T I M E
L E M O N
R E N D

116.—
V
L O B
L I L A C
V O L U T E S
B A T E A U
C E A S E
S U E S

18.—*Cross Word Enigma.*

In wicked, not in good;
In blanket, not in hood;
In valley, not in hill;
In specie, not in bill;
In circle, not in hoop;
In languish, not in droop;
In humble, not in bold;
WHOLE is a metal the color of gold.

ADELAIDE.

19.—*A Hexagon.*

1 To desire. 2 To urge forward. 3 Thorns. 4 A poisonous premial plant. 5 A gleaner. 6 To scoff. 7 Wanders from the truth.

CYRIL DEANE.

20.—*A Diamond.*

1 A letter from Boston. 2 A fragment. 3 To infatuate. 4 A kind of bread. 5 To tear. 6 A fastening. 7 A letter from Boston.

MRS. J. W.

Curtailments.

21.—Curtail a Syriac word, signifying *father*, and leave the yarn of a weaver's warp.

22.—The white poplar, and leave a Hebrew masculine name, signifying *vanity*.

23.—Doting, and leave a plant that yields indigo.

24.—A grayish black mineral, and leave relating to the foundation.

25.—The sulphuret of zinc, and leave to mingle together.

26.—A certain nation, and leave backbone or spine.

F. S. F.

27.—*A Double Acrostic.*

(Words of five letters.)

1 A skirmish. 2 A girl's name. 3 To excite to action. 4 A finger's breadth. 5 To liberate. 6 A blunder. The primals and finals name parts of a harness.

DINAH.

28.—*A Square.*

1 A tract of low land. 2 To make reparation. 3 A large kind of paper. 4 An entanglement. 5 A girl's name.

VERBENA.

29.—*Numerical Enigma.*

The whole, composed of eleven letters, is fancy. The 1, 8, is a pronoun. The 2, 9, 11, 5, 10, 6, is a favorite. The 7, 4, 3, is a Turkish commander.

VINNIE.

Drop Letter Proverbs.

30.—H-a-t-i-b-t-e-t-a-w-a-t-.

31.—T-o-e-h-t-r-s-o-a-e-u-e.

32.—O-e-a-l-v-a-d-e-r-.

33.—L-e-y-e-n-e-n-e-u-s-l.

34.—N-v-r-e-e-r-o-w-l-d-i-g.

TEDDY.

Word Syncopations.

35.—Take slow from narrated, and leave a color.

36.—A passage-way from gowned, and leave a bush.

J. D. L.

Answers in two Months.

Prizes.

For the largest list of correct answers to this month's puzzles, received before August 10th, we offer an illustrated novelette; and for the next best list, a book of poems.

Solvers.

Answers to the April puzzles were received from Tri Angle, Katie Smith, Vinnie, Ida May, Black Hawk, Teddy, J. D. L., Ned Nason, Jack, Birdie Lane, Eulalie, Bert Rand, Nicholas, Annie Kirkpatrick, Minnie Jones, Cora A. L., Birdie Browne, Good Hugh, Lillie Lee, Bridget McQ., A. Mary Khan and Geraldine.

Prize-Winners.

Tri Angle, Toledo, O., for the largest number of correct answers. Nicholas, Chicago, Ill., for the next best list.

EDITOR'S DRAWER.

THINGS PLEASANT AND OTHERWISE.

RURAL JOYS.

Last winter we were "mad as hops"
When Cousin Joe came into town,
And talked about his stock and crops,
And played the tiresome "country clown."
We felt ashamed of him—his dress,
His speech, his hands, his awkward feet;
We groaned to hear him, "Wal, I guess!"
And shuddered when we saw him eat.

But now it's different, you know;
We close the house, leave town in style,
And go to see "dear Cousin Joe,"
And live upon the farm a while.
Those "caows" now furnish us with cream,
With which new "taters" go quite well;
We also have Joe's double team
And drive about, tremendous swell.

We don't so much mind sitting down
And eating with our cousin, here;
And somehow he's not such a clown
As formerly—it's very queer!
His country ways no more annoy,
Nor do we think him a disgrace;
His company we quite enjoy—
In fact, the farm's a splendid place!

Our city neighbors think we go
To Newport (which we can't afford);
Meanwhile we visit Cousin Joe,
And never think to pay our board.
And when the season ends, and we
Have had to foot no hotel bill,
Joe's "Come again" we hear with glee,
And say: "Oh, thank you, Joe; we will!"

—*Tid Bits.*

My wife and I have had some decidedly unpleasant experience with servant maids. We have had maids of all sizes, shapes, temperaments, nationalities and religions. We have had blondes and we have had brunettes. We have had teetotalers, likewise bacchanalians. We have had kleptomaniacs of the most aggravated type, and, on the other hand, we have had domestics so honest that they refused to be vaccinated for fear it would "take." Furthermore, we have had one-legged and one-armed servants; and once we had a bearded woman who had left a dime museum in disgust because the manager wanted her to take tickets and feed the animals, beside attending to her legitimate duties as a monstrosity. In short, the acquirement of such information as we do not possess regarding the female domestic of to-day would be a task necessitating the expenditure of very little time and labor; but we never had an absolutely perfect servant until Mary Jane came.

It was just at dusk on a beautiful September evening when she presented herself at my door and modestly applied for the situation. She only demanded $10 a month, although we had always paid $16, and she said she only wanted to go out one afternoon every three weeks. It seemed too good to be true, but we took her. She far more than realized our wildest hopes. She was never saucy, she never "struck," she had no "followers," she did not drink. Neither did she go to church at inconvenient hours on Sunday morning, nor stay out after 10 P. M., when at rare intervals she went to see her friends. She was a perfect laundress and a first-class cook. She was quiet, refined and exceedingly respectful. The children idolized her, and my wife grew to regard her more as a valued friend than as a servant.

When she had been with us about sixteen years, I met with financial reverses, and it became necessary to economize in all directions. My wife and I decided that we must dispense with the services of Mary Jane. I agreed to break the sad news to her. I summoned her to my study. As she entered I looked up with tear-dimmed eyes and I struggled to speak, but could not. It was Mary Jane who broke the silence.

"Mr. Furguson," she said, gently, "I think I know what you want to say to me. You have been unfortunate in business, and you cannot afford to keep me any longer."

"Yes, Mary Jane," I said, brokenly, "it s even so."

"How much money will you require to extricate you from your present dilemna?"

I looked up in surprise.

"Why do you ask, Mary Jane?"

"I will tell you presently, sir; but first, if you please, answer my question."

"Well," I said, "$20,000 would put me on my feet again."

"Here are government bonds to the amount of $30,000," she said, taking a package from her pocket; "they are yours."

"What does this mean?" I stammered. "Where did you get these bonds?"

Mary Jane smiled at my amazement.

"I have saved nearly every penny of my wages," she said, "for many years. I have invested in railroad stock and have been very fortunate. Take the bonds, Mr. Ferguson, they are all yours."

I was much affected. I wept.

"Mary Jane," I said, "words cannot express the"——

Just then my wife woke me up to tell me that the new cook had not yet recovered from her indisposition of the previous evening, caused by a too free indulgence in alcoholic stimulants, and that I would have to go down and make the kitchen fire. As I slowly and sorrowfully descended to the basement, I found it hard to believe that those sixteen years of happiness had been an involuntary creation of my brain.

The following story is told of a well-known member of the Bar in Alleghany County, New York. With his scholarly attainments and profound knowledge of legal lore he possessed the simple dependent nature of a child, and a child's utter guilelessness and faith in his kind. His wife, fortunately for the worldly success of the pair, was shrewd and practical in a marked degree; upon her strong independence of character Judge C. leaned heavily, except within the domain of his profession, where, curiously enough, his opinions were singularly prompt and infallible. In the domestic and social circles, however, he deferred to Mrs. C. in the simplest matters; and so habitual had this state of things become that it did not occur to either of them that there was anything unusual in it. One day he was suffering from toothache, and his wife sent him to the nearest dentist for relief. Obediently he went, got into the chair, and opened his mouth for the preliminary examination. "Which tooth is it aches, judge?" inquired the dentist, posing the forceps. There was a moment's hesitation; then the judge sat up from his reclining position, and looking innocently at the dentist said, in all good faith, "Well, now, I don't know; I'll go home and ask Helen."

"You ain't goin' to let the circuit-rider have that hoss, air you, Jim?" said an old Western man to his son. Several prankish fellows stood gazing at a vicious looking horse that had just been brought out of a stable. "Yes," Jim replied, winking at his friends, "and I don't want you to interfere. When a preacher comes around here with such an unnecessary show of meekness, w'y, he deserves a few slams against the ground!" "Yes; but, Jimmie, he's sich an inoffensive feller!" "Makes no difference; he's got to ride this horse or none. If you say a word, pap, I won't help you gather corn next week." This declaration silenced the old man. The preacher, meek, and with a timid air, came out of the house and inquired of Jim which horse he was to ride. "This one," said Jim. "He looks pretty bad; but I reckon he'll be all right when you get on him. Come on, fellers, and help me lift him on." The men, with many winks and sly chuckles, came forward, and with great difficulty succeeded in seating the preacher in the saddle. The horse bounded like a buck, and the men shouted; but the preacher did not fall off, but after lighting a cigar while the horse was jumping, remarked, "Boys, I forgot to tell you I am the cow-boy evangelist. When I get through with this old stager, give me something lively."

A naval question of some importance, particularly to the victualing department, having been raised—namely, What are the dining powers of a midshipman?—Captain Beaufort has volunteered his personal experiences. He says: "I had eaten my dinner at the midshipmen's table—and a very good one, as I always did. After it the captain's steward came up and said, 'The captain's compliments, and he desires the favor of your company to dinner.' 'But I've dined,' said I. 'For mercy's sake don't say that, sir,' said he, 'for I shall be in a scrape if you do! I ought to have asked you this morning, but I forgot.' So I thought I must go; and two hours afterwards I did go, and I dined, and I think I made my usual good dinner. Just as we rose from table a signal was made by the admiral to send an officer on board, and as it was my turn, I had to go off in the boat. When I got on board the admiral's ship, the admiral said to me, 'Ah, Mr. Beaufort, I believe?' 'Yes, sir,' said I. 'Well, Mr. Beaufort,' said he, 'the papers you are to take back will not be ready this half-hour; but I am just sitting down to dinner, and shall be glad of your company.' Now, as to a midshipman's refusing to dine with the admiral, there are not the words for it in the naval dictionary. So I sat down to my third dinner; and I got back to my ship just in time for tea."

"My dear," said Johnnie's mother, "would you like to have your picture taken?" "Yes, if I can have it taken just as I wish," said Johnnie. His mother wrote a note to the photographer telling him to take her son's picture just as he wanted it. Everybody laughed when they saw the picture. I do not believe you can guess how Johnnie had it taken. He just stood straight up with his back to the camera. He said he could see his face in a looking-glass, and he had often wondered how he looked when he turned his back. It was a long time before this little boy heard the last of his queer picture. After a while he hid it, for so many people asked to see it that he become tired of it.

The action of that New Jersey bank in dumping $4,000 in silver on its floor in payment of its checks in the hands of a rival institution brings up the question of legal tender. Gold has always been legal tender in the United States. With a brief interval previous to the passage of the Bland act silver dollars have been also. Greenbacks are, but gold and silver certificates are not, except on customs, taxes, and public dues. National bank notes are not legal tender,

and can be, and often have been, refused in payment of debt. Subsidiary coin is legal tender only in limited quantities.

A gentleman went to the stamp window of the post-office in a neighboring city and called for one hundred one-cent stamps, tendering in payment one hundred one-cent pieces.

"Those are not legal tender in any such amounts," growled the stamp clerk. "I refuse to accept them."

"You do, eh?" answered the gentleman. "Well, give me one stamp," at the same time shoving out a penny. The stamp was forthcoming.

"Now give me a stamp." He got it.

"Another stamp."

"Now another."

"See here," said the clerk, "how many stamps do you want? You are keeping twenty people waiting."

"Oh, I always keep within the law," responded the gentleman. "Another stamp, please. Pennies are not legal tender in large amounts. Another stamp."

And he shoved out his pennies and purchased stamps one at a time till he got his hundred. But the clerk was cured. Pennies are legal tender at his window in barrel lots.

"Miss Garpickle, you are trifling with me!"

Bardolph Kiljordan stood before her as erect, imperious, and gloomy as the star actor of a broken and dismembered dramatic combination standing on one side of the track half way between stations, and watching a handcar propelled by section men sweeping rapidly past and disappearing in the hazy distance.

Mr. Kiljordan burned with the indignation of an abused, insulted man.

"For months and months," he said, "you have encouraged me. You have smiled upon me. You have accepted my attentions. You have listened to me with apparent approval when I have ventured to hint at a feeling stronger than friendship"——

"Mr. Kiljordan," interrupted the young lady, "I will not deny that your attentions have been agreeable to me."

"Then why, Vinnie," he exclaimed, imploringly, "why do you tell me it can never be? Why do you look at me coldly and say we were never meant for each other?"

"I would have saved you this pain if I could, Mr. Kiljordan. I have waited and waited, hoping that the barrier between us might disappear—that you would—would see what is it that interposes so fatally"——

"Vinnie," he exclaimed, tremulously and excitedly, "perhaps it is not too late, even yet! Perhaps I may be able to"——

"It is impossible, Mr. Kiljordan," replied the young lady, firmly yet kindly. "I shall always entertain the highest esteem for you as a man, a citizen, a friend, and an excellent judge,"—here her voice faltered,—"of post-theatrical refreshments, but any closer relationship, I am now convinced, can never be thought of."

"Vinnie Garpickle!" he exclaimed, with bitterness, "so be it! I shall not go down on my knees. It would do no good. The carpet, besides,"—and the young man looked at it dejectedly,—"if you will excuse me for saying so, Miss Garpickle, is—is not in that condition of—ah—of tidiness that—er"——

"Perhaps, Mr. Kiljordan," suggested the young lady, freezingly, "you will put an end to this painful scene by" ——

"Going? Certainly, Miss Garpickle, certainly. But I think I have the right to ask you, since this will probably be the last time I shall ever have the opportunity, what the nature of the barrier is that separates us. Have I not?"

"You have, sir."

"Then why have you refused to be my wife?"

"Because, Mr. Kiljordan," she replied, with ineffable sadness, "I can never link my destiny with that of a young man who wears reversible cuffs."—*Chicago Tribune.*

There is a sharper's game which has been played for the last hundred years, and as the turning point is avarice the game works forty-nine times where it fails once. Two sharpers set out a few weeks ago to play it on a Wayne county farmer. One of them came along one day and wanted to buy the farm. As the farmer wanted to sell it was quite easy to strike a bargain. The price was to be $4000 in cash, and the man handed over $250 to bind the bargain. In two days a second stranger came along and wanted the farm. He wanted it so badly that he couldn't stand still. He found indications of coal, natural gas and oil, and he was willing to give $6000 for the place. The idea was, of course, that he would be awful sick of his first sale and seek to buy the man off. It would pay him to offer the man $1500 to release him.

The second stranger was only out of sight when the first one turned up again. His mouth watered over the prospect, but not for long. The farmer explained that he had been offered $2500 more, and added:—

"But I don't care for money. The $4000 is enough for me, and it's all the old farm is worth. When you are ready to pay the balance we'll make out the papers."

The purchaser offered to release him for $1000—$700—$500—$300, but the farmer didn't want to be released. He hung to the bargain-money, and he's got it yet, while the pair of sharpers rave and gnash their teeth every time they think of the thickness of his skull.

MR. BROWN IN SEARCH OF THE PARIS EXPOSITION.

Wonders if he is happy.

Is distressed at his internal commotion.

Mr. Brown is determined not to be sick.

Wonders if he could eat a little.

Is almost sorry that he started.

Neptune receives his contribution.

Swears at Paris and the Exposition.

Blast your brandy and wine.

Rather die than live.